

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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EXCLUSIVE READERS' Q&A:
GARY PAFFETT



Mercedes superstar pulls up a chair and tackles the readers posers, [page 20](#)

Title-winning teenager snapped up by iconic British team and will race on F1 tracks

BRIT RISING STAR O'SULLIVAN GETS WILLIAMS AND FIA F3 CHANCE



**"He is very
focused
and very
fast too"**

Trevor Carlin

Teenager has inked a deal with Williams team



Briton O'Sullivan has been a stand-out single-seater talent

By Graham Keillor

British rising star Zak O'Sullivan is set to continue his upward trajectory this year after joining Williams' driver academy and getting a Formula 1-supporting FIA Formula 3 Carlin race seat.

O'Sullivan, who turned 17 last Sunday, took a dominant title with Carlin in last year's GB3 championship, renamed from BRDC British Formula 3 mid-season. He stays with Carlin for his 2022 campaign on F1 circuits and will also be "fully integrated"

in the Williams team with his role including simulator and development work.

Speaking to Motorsport News late last year, Carlin boss Trevor Carlin likened O'Sullivan to Carlin's former charge Sebastian Vettel.

"If I had to compare Zak with somebody that we've run it could be someone like Sebastian because he was very serious, very focused and very intelligent and fast and he went on to win four World championships. Zak is more akin to Sebastian than any other I've had," Carlin said.

Full story [page six](#)

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT
**MOTORSPORT
NEWS**

FEATURE

**WILL THE
PRANCING
HORSE GET
ITS MOJO
BACK?**

We look at Ferrari's Formula 1 prospects for 2022, [page 16](#)



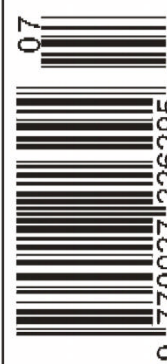
INSIGHT

**WHY THE
AMERICAN
TALENTS
TACKLE
THE UK**

We take an in-depth look at Team USA Scholarship, [page 26](#)



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Atlas plate style diff, historic spec. with 'Boreham' mods, 18 tooth side gears **£495.80** £594.96

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Spare side gears, 18 or 22 tooth (please state)
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Crush washer
Crown wheel bearing

Pinion bearing
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English axle weld-on brace ring

Special 10mm axle brace, English axle
SPARES
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Flange, not semi-floating, suit std. axle

Flange, Group 1 type
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£77.50 £93.00
£59.50 £71.40
£59.50 £71.40
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English axle, Caterham, 22 spline **£324.00** £388.80
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ESCORT BRAKING PARTS

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Wilwood brakes kit, 247x20, Midlite caliper
Wilwood brakes kit, 285x21, Midlite caliper
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Wilwood master cylinders
Wilwood proportioning valve, knob
Wilwood proportioning valve, lever
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£42.50 £51.00
£57.50 £69.00
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Escort RS front springs, 145-220lbs
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Gaz, adjustable rate rear shocks
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pair **£33.80** £40.56
from **£15.90** £19.08
£24.50 £29.40
£10.50 £12.60
£67.60 £81.12
£299.50 £359.40
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RH 2:9 ratio **£119.50** £143.40
RH 2:4 ratio **£139.50** £167.40
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RH 2:4 ratio **£174.50** £209.40
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LH 2:2 ratio **£214.50** £257.40

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Roller bearing top mount - spherical bearing
Roller bearing top mount - roller bearing
Roller bearing plastic dust covers
Spherical bearing race type top mounts

pair **£16.80** £20.16
each **£49.50** £59.40
each **£49.50** £59.40
pair **£9.50** £11.40
pair **£49.60** £59.52

TCA's 'Pattern' style

TCA's 'OEM' style

TCA bush insertion tool

Twin cam anti-roll bar

Anti-dive kit

World cup X-member

World cup mounts

RS2000 track rod ends

Group 4 style all steel U/J coupling

4-link kit

Heavy duty 4-link kit

Group 4 round turret kit

Mk1 spring shackles

Mk2 spring shackles

OEM Escort RS struts

Group 4 spec. front RS struts

Escort RS stub axles

RS steering arms

Heavy duty steering arms, gusseted

Quick fit steering arm kit

Ally hubs - standard or Group 4

Stub axle hardware kit

Watts linkage kit

Taper leaf springs, 146lb rate

Ally tube strut brace, round tube

Work style 60mm oval tube strut brace

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pair **£63.50** £76.20
£14.90 £17.88
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£31.00 £37.20
£106.50 £127.80
£28.50 £34.20
£10.50 £12.60
£19.80 £23.76
£119.50 £143.40
£185.00 £222.00
£65.00 £78.00
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£23.50 £28.20
£96.95 £116.34
£128.00 £153.60
£130.00 £156.00
£69.50 £83.40
£79.50 £95.40
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£10.90 £13.08
£199.50 £239.40
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£51.50 £61.80
£12.90 £15.48
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£16.50 £19.80
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£13.90 £16.68

OEM TCA's
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Mk2 Front Wing
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www.rallydesign.co.uk



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X-Flow ally radiator **£179.60** £215.52
RS2000 (Pinto) ally radiator **£179.60** £215.52
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WCP Interrupter pump
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WCP interrupter fuel pump **£29.00** £34.80
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Bonnet pin kits, stainless **£5.00** £6.00
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M16 Calipers from
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M16 calipers to fit standard discs, pair **£89.00** £106.80
M16 calipers to fit vented discs (no spacers needed), pair **£98.50** £118.20
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Group 1 vented discs (247x20), pair **£39.00** £46.80

4.25 ltr FIA plumbed-in fire system, full installation kit, FIA homologation EX 037.13
Kit **£159.80** £191.76

Escort Laminated & Heated Screens

Escort Mk1 front laminated screen (incl. rubber) **£69.50** £83.40
Escort Mk2 front laminated screen (incl. rubber) **£69.50** £83.40
Escort Mk1 front heated laminated screen (incl. rubber) **£198.60** £238.32
Escort Mk2 front heated laminated screen (incl. rubber) **£198.60** £238.32
Escort Mk1 front screen rubber **£24.92** £29.90
Escort Mk1 rear screen rubber **£23.92** £28.70
Escort Mk2 front screen rubber **£29.08** £34.90
Escort Mk2 rear screen rubber **£29.08** £34.90
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Escort Mk2 Rubber Parts

Bonnet bump stop pair **£6.20** £7.44
Bonnet rail bump stop, set of 4 **£10.90** £13.08
Bonnet bump stop, centre-rear **£5.10** £6.12
Wiring loom bulkhead grommet **£6.90** £8.28
Bonnet release cable grommet **£5.20** £6.24
Steering column bulkhead grommet **£7.20** £8.64
Handbrake backplate dust boots pair **£7.10** £8.52
Spedo cable bulkhead grommet **£5.20** £6.24
Throttle pedal pad **£5.20** £6.24
Brake and clutch pedal pads pair **£8.00** £9.60
Shock absorber top caps pair **£13.90** £16.68
Rear bumper side plugs, set of 4 **£9.90** £11.88
Oil line bulkhead grommet **£5.10** £6.12
Brake servo rod bellows **£5.20** £6.24

COMMENT

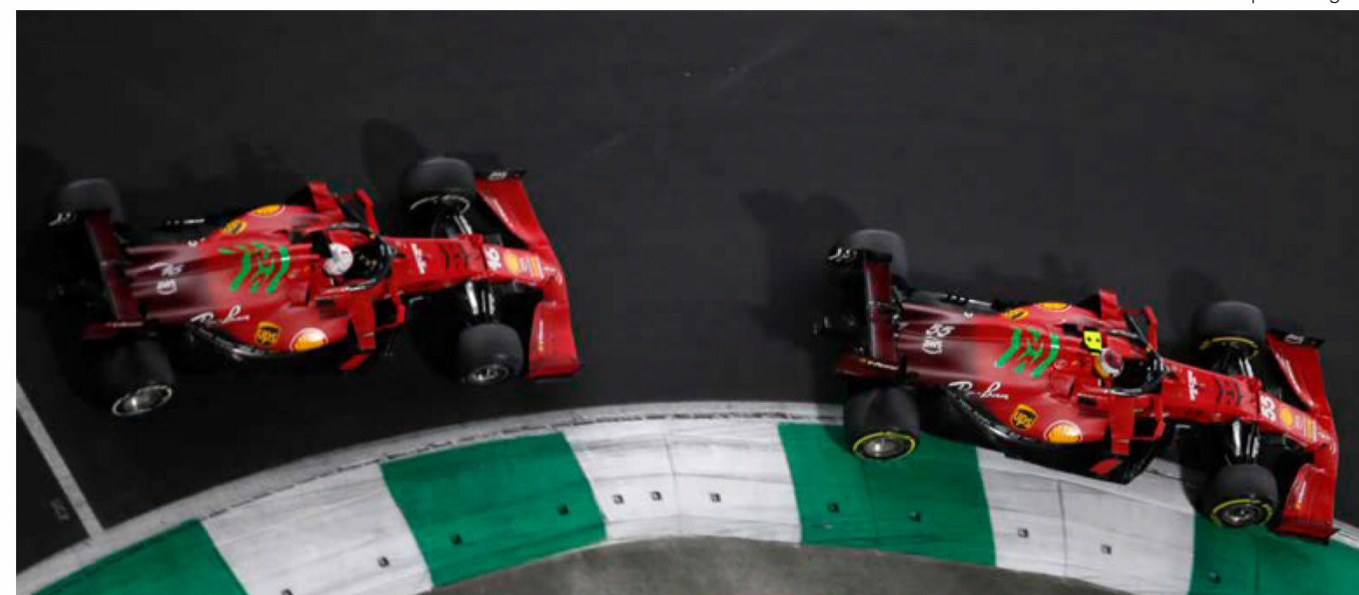


Photo: Motorsport Images

Sainz (r) and Leclerc have the responsibility of reigniting the Ferrari spark in 2022

CAN THE SLEEPING GIANT AWAKE?

The old adage is that Formula 1 needs Ferrari and Ferrari needs Formula 1. Given that the Prancing Horse has not galloped into victory lane since Sebastian Vettel took first place at the Singapore Grand Prix in 2019, it has been pretty easy to imagine grand prix racing without its most famous team in the last two seasons.

Finishing in sixth place in the constructors' championship battle in 2020 represented the Maranello firm's worst position in the makes' contest since 1980. That is remarkable.

There is a feeling of optimism surrounding the Scuderia as it looks ahead to Formula 1's new era as James Roberts reports on page 16.

The poor form by the Italian firm over the last two seasons has, to a degree, given the team a chance to focus on the challenges ahead with the radically reworked cars that will adhere to the refreshed regulations. We will see the results of the team's efforts when the wraps come off the 2022 challenger next week.

The driver line-up of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz is one of the most potent on the grid and given a half-decent chassis, which team boss Mattia Binotto as promised the pair, then Ferrari's path back to the front could resume this term.

Elsewhere in this issue, we look at the FIA's efforts to unearth the next generation of rally stars and find out that the UK talent has already left its mark in a highly positive way. The World Rally Championship has three talents from the British Isles already at the sharp end, but the focus must always be about uncovering the next wave of talent. That is the only thing that will make rallying truly make an impact on the national psyche. It is a hard task, but Luke Barry tells us that the future looks good.

Double DTM champion Gary Paffett pulls up a chair for our readers' questions and tells us how agonisingly close he was to becoming a fully-fledged grand prix driver. These days he is embracing his new role as the team manager of the Mercedes Formula E squad and that means he is very much enjoying the current campaign.

Deputy editor Graham Keilloh investigates the success of the Team USA Scholarship, which is into its fourth decade of bringing emerging American talents to our shores to take part in ultra-competitive nursery slopes of UK motorsport. It is a highly worthy initiative and one that, due to the success of its former incumbents, an effective one.

Finally, don't forget that MN needs your help as we aim to reveal who Scotland's favourite motorsport hero is. Check out page 33 to find out how to register your opinion.

Matt James

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Double DTM star talks about his near miss with Formula 1



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Why Uncle Sam came to the UK

We explore the heritage and history of the Team USA Scholarship



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MN vote: Pick your favourite Flying Scotsman

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RACING NEWS

Photos :Motorsport Images



Interlagos hosted the final sprint race in late 2022

F1 SEEKS COMPROMISE ON SPRINT QUALIFYING

Slimmed down plan for Saturday events in 2022 to appease teams amid budget increase fears

By Matt James

Bosses of Formula 1 have proposed a compromise to resolve the deadlock with teams over the number of Sprint qualifying races this season.

F1 chiefs had hoped initially to boost the number of events to six for 2022, but

teams railed against the plan and sought a rise in the cost cap to allow them to fund the extra mileage.

Sprint qualifying was introduced into grand prix racing last term with shorter sprint-style events on Saturday evening offering World championship points and setting the grid for the main race on

Sunday. The extra races took place at Silverstone, Monza and Interlagos.

The new plan, which F1 bosses have released along with data showing the increased audience the Sprint qualifying races brought to the sport, revolves around keeping the status quo from last year. Three events have been mooted

– although no venues have been determined yet – and the financial kick-back for the teams would remain the same as in 2022.

McLaren boss Zak Brown revealed last week that some teams were asking for an extra \$5 million to cover the cost of six sprint races in 2022 but this was flatly

refused by F1, which said such an increase in costs would go against the theory behind the £103 million cost cap for this season.

The Formula 1 teams are due to discuss the proposal, and it will only be given the green light should eight of the 10 teams agree to the initiative.

HAAS FIRST TO REVEAL HINTS ON 2022 CAR



The wraps have been taken off the first 2022 car: the Haas VF-22

The Haas Formula 1 team was the first to release images of its new-look grand prix challenger last week.

The American-based team, which finished last in the points chase in 2022, offers a few clues as to the likely definitive design although some of the precise details were not released on the images from Haas. The definitive car will be prepared for the opening testing session of the season at Barcelona in Spain on February 23-25.

The team principal Gene Haas says that the chassis, designated as the VF-22, is the fruition of more than a year's work on drilling down into the new regulations. F1 rules will undergo a major shake-up

this term with the levels of downforce being slashed and new lower-profile tyres will be used.

The VF-22 will be driven by Mick Schumacher and Nikita Mazepin, who are both remaining with the squad.

Haas said: "It's that time of year where you're naturally optimistic that the hard work and effort of everyone will translate to a competitive entry on track. We made the decision back in 2020 to really channel time and resources into the VF-22, foregoing anything track-related for 2021, which wasn't easy to watch.

"Hopefully that decision bears fruit and we return to challenging for points and taking something from the weekends."

MERC'S KEY MAN FOR ASIAN SPORTSCAR OUTINGS

Mercedes F1 strategy king James Vowles will take part in the Asian Le Mans series which kicks off in Dubai this weekend.

Vowles will line-up in a Garage 59-run McLaren 720S GT3 car alongside Manuel Maldonado and Nicolai Kjaergaard for the two-round contest which begins on Sunday and finishes in Abu Dhabi on February 19-20. Vowles will then head straight to Barcelona for the first F1 test of the season.

The Vowles, Maldonado and Kjaergaard crew will race alongside a sister Garage 59 car driven by Marvin Kirchhofer, team

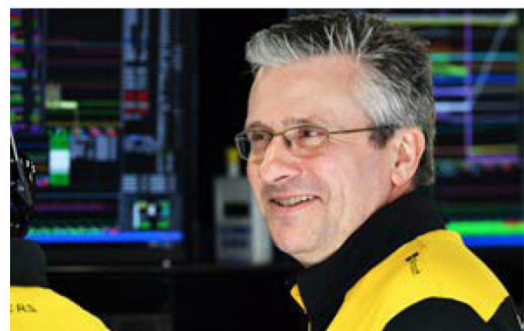
co-owner Alexander West and up-and-coming British star Frank Bird.

Garage 59 is returning to running McLarens after a previous association with Aston Martin. Team boss Andrew Kirkaldy: "I'm really happy with the driver line-ups we've secured for Asian Le Mans.

"We're all looking forward to getting started with the McLaren 720S and hopefully getting our first win of the season. For sure it will also be handy to have one of F1's best strategists in the team."



Vowles (left) will take centre stage in Asian Le Mans Series outings



Pat Fry is the new technical boss

MAJOR SHAKE-UP OF ALPINE FORMULA 1 TEAM'S TOP JOBS

Former McLaren and Ferrari engineering guru Pat Fry has been handed the chief technical officer role at Alpine F1 as part of an overhaul of the Enstone team's backroom staff.

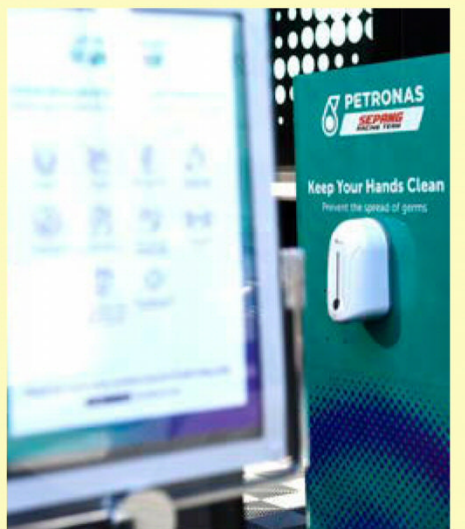
Fry was previously the technical director at the squad, and that position will now be occupied by Matt Harman. The team has yet to reveal who its new principal will be

for 2022, although former Aston Martin man Otmar Szafnauer is strongly linked to a position with the team. The team's chief executive officer Laurent Rossi explained: "We are considerably strengthening Alpine F1 Team by having Pat and Matt at the helm of engineering in Enstone.

"Pat is one of the most experienced engineers in Formula 1, while Matt's drive

and expertise will prove critical in extracting the full potential of our race cars, thanks in particular to his unique expertise combining chassis and engine development."

Alpine, which will once again field two-time F1 title winner Fernando Alonso alongside Esteban Ocon, will launch its new machine on February 21.



Vaccines for all in F1 paddock

VACCINES MANDATED FOR ALL F1 PERSONNEL

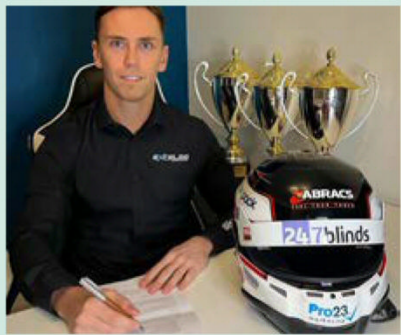
Grand prix racing bosses have implemented a rule to make it mandatory for all those in the F1 to be double jabbed ahead of the 2022 season.

The decision, which was only communicated last week, was made at the World Council meeting in December and read: "F1 will require all travelling personnel to be fully vaxxed and will not request exemptions."

Exemptions will only be allowed on a case-by-case basis but anyone who does not comply will have to undergo a more rigorous testing programme.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, four drivers have missed races due to contracting Covid including Lewis Hamilton. Four others have contracted the virus while not in competition.

The bubble system will still be recommended to reduce each individual's contacts, although this is no longer mandatory. It is believed that all competitors are already double jabbed. The expanded policy will cover all team members, media, staff and guests who attend the races.



Lloyd will drive a Hyundai

LLOYD AIMS FOR BTCC WINS ON HYUNDAI SWITCH

British Touring Car Championship race winner Dan Lloyd will team up with Tom Ingram to drive an Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 in this season's competition.

The Yorkshire-based driver, the 2018 TCR UK title holder, took part in his first full season in the BTCC last year at the wheel of a Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra and had a strong second half of the campaign with four podiums in the last nine races on his way to 11th in the standings.

Lloyd says teaming up with Ingram, who took the South Korean manufacturer's maiden BTCC wins in 2021, would be a boost to his aims to perform at the front.

Lloyd, 29, said: "My main goal for the 2022 campaign is to become a more consistent frontrunner, and I feel that Excelr8 has the full package to help me to achieve this. It's going to be great to have Tom [Ingram] as a team-mate and to be able to lean on his experience whilst getting used to the new car."

Team principal Justina Williams added: "Dan is quick driver as his results have shown, but he also has a strong understanding into what is required from a racing programme."

GOW TO REMAIN IN TOP FIA POST UNTIL 2023

British Touring Car Championship chief executive Alan Gow has been reappointed as the leader of the FIA's Touring Car Commission for a further two years.

The Surrey-based Australian has been returned to his post as the leader by the FIA World Council, which is now led by new FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem. It means Gow will continue to oversee all FIA-sanctioned regional and international tin-top categories. It will take him to a 13th year in the job. Gow will also continue with his role as a member of the World Endurance Commission, where he has represented the FIA since 2018, for a further two years.

The FIA has also confirmed that former racer Deborah Mayer will take over from Michele Mouton as the head of the FIA's Women in Motorsport commission. Mayer created the Iron Dames project, which has supported women in competition.



Alan Gow retains top FIA job

ROWBOTTOM AND SHEDDEN RETURN TO SPEARHEAD TEAM DYNAMICS BTCC LINE-UP

Returning duo aim to snare more silverware for Honda Civic Type R crew

Photo: Team Dynamics, Richard Mille Racing, Motorbase Performance, Motorsport Images



Dynamics drivers are reunited

By Matt James

British Touring Car Championship race winner Dan Rowbottom thinks his successful 2021 campaign has vindicated his selection in the Team Dynamics Honda squad and he will return alongside team-mate Gordon Shedden again this term.

Rowbottom stepped into the seat vacated by three-time champion Matt Neal last season as the team principal took a step back from front-line competition. The Kidderminster racer took a win at Oulton Park and landed three other podiums. He also claimed the Jack Sears Trophy.

The 32-year-old explained: "I'd said to the guys from the outset [of 2021] 'give me a strong car and I'll prove to you I can drive' and I certainly

proved all my sceptics wrong last season and showed everyone that I can truly race. This year has got to be maximum focus for me to win the drivers' championship."

Shedden is already a three-time BTCC champion and returned to the UK for the first time in three years in 2021. He won two races in the Civic and placed sixth in the points. The Scotsman said: "The [Team Dynamics] boys have been working their socks off during the off-season to give us cars that will be super competitive, so we both need to go out there now and repay their hard work."

The BTCC will introduce new hybrid technology for 2022. Team Dynamics holds three permits to compete – the TOCA BTCC Licences – and Neal said that the team had yet to fill the third seat.

RALLY LEGEND OGIER COMMITS TO LMP2

Frenchman Sebastien Ogier will contest the 2022 World Endurance Championship in the LMP2 division for the Richard Mille Racing Team.

The 54-time WRC round winner will team up with Lilou Wadoux and Charles Milesi for the next chapter in his motorsport journey. He had initially been linked with a drive for his rally employer Toyota in

WEC's Hypercar category but will instead take part in the second-tier category in a Oreca 07 chassis.

Ogier said he was excited about the next phase of his career. "Up until now, I have focused on my rally career, but it has been on my mind for a long time that endurance racing could be a good challenge," he said. "LMP2 is a fantastic

category and the best way for me to reach the highest level of endurance racing and improve in this discipline. I am a novice for sure, but I want to enjoy myself while assessing what's possible and seeing how close I can get to the best."

The 2022 World Endurance Championship will get underway with the 1000 Miles of Sebring on March 17-18.



Milesi, Wadoux and Ogier will form three-strong LMP2 crew

DI RESTA JOINS UNITED FOR SEBRING CHALLENGE

Former F1 driver Paul di Resta has been drafted in to the United Autosports team for the opening round of the World Endurance Championship at Sebring next month.

He will replace Alex Lynn in the team's line-up as Lynn is unable to take part in the Florida race due to clashing commitments with Chip Ganassi Racing in IMSA.

Di Resta, who will form part of Peugeot's return to sportscar racing, will team up with Josh Pierson and Oliver Jarvis in United Autosports's

Oreca 07 chassis. It will mark his return to the team he drove for at Le Mans in 2021 and during the 2019/2020 season.

Di Resta commented: "I'll be taking up my duties with Peugeot later in the year, but I think LMP2 is looking really good this year in a very special championship. It's something to look forward to alongside Olly and Josh. We will be looking to maximise what we can in an ultra-competitive championship. Thanks to Zak Brown, Richard Dean and everyone for the opportunity."



Di Resta will be reunited with United Autosports LMP2 team



NAPA RACING ADDS SPLASH OF COLOUR TO 2022 BTCC

The wraps came off the NAPA Racing-backed Motorbase Performance Ford Focus machines that will take to the grid for this season's British Touring Car Championship last week. The cars will be handled by champion Ash Sutton and series returnee Dan Cammish in the 2022 competition.

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

Poles win prizes

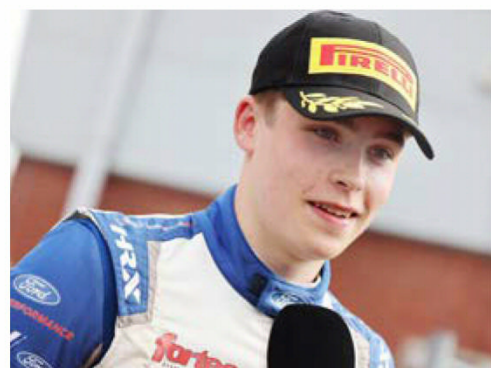
The Jack Cavill Pole Position Cup, a long-standing GB3 feature, will be added to the new GB4 championship's offering in 2022, thanks to the generosity of award founder John Cavill. Drivers will compete for £125 and a trophy for each pole secured in qualifying, while the driver with most poles throughout the season gets £1000 and a trophy. GB3's offering is increased for 2022, with the pole prize up 25% to £250, and the end-of-season prize doubled to £2000.

Hitech hires

Hitech Grand Prix has unveiled Eduardo Coseteng and Daniel Mavlyutov as its first two drivers for the team's debut British Formula 4 campaign this year. Coseteng, from the Philippines, switches from competing with Argenti Motorsport in British F4 last year, where he took pole in the final round, while Russian Mavlyutov steps up from getting his first car-racing experience in Formula Ford's two end-of-season events the Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy last year.

Ammonite is alright

Frontrunning Formula Ford outfit Low Dempsey Racing has changed its name to Ammonite Motorsport for 2022. The team was previously renamed from its long-held Cliff Dempsey Racing title in 2020 when Andy Low bought the squad. Low said: "It was great to keep Dempsey in the name during the transitional period, especially whilst Cliff was still part of the team during our first year, but we believe that now is the right time to relaunch."



Browning: full-time at Hitech

BROWNING BACK ON UK TRACKS IN GB3

British Formula 4 champion Luke Browning will be back racing full-time on UK circuits this year after inking a GB3 deal with the Hitech Grand Prix team.

Browning won 2020's British F4 title with Fortec in dramatic fashion at the last from Carlin's Zak O'Sullivan and last year raced in ADAC F4, finishing third in the table. He also made a one-off GB3 appearance with Fortec at his local Oulton Park meeting and immediately ran at the front and took a race win.

Browning, 20, at Hitech this year will race alongside Bryce Aron, who returns to GB3 after competing therein with Carlin last year, and karting graduate Cian Shields. Famous junior single-seater squad Hitech GP has been a consistent GB3 frontrunner since joining the contest in 2020. Kush Maini finished second in the table for the team that year while recent FIA F3 graduate Reece Ushijima placed fourth in the standings for Hitech in 2021.

Browning said: "I'm delighted to announce I'll be joining Hitech GP for our 2022 title push. I'm feeling excited and confident in the team, and I'm looking forward to fighting for victories this year. Pre-season testing has been great and we're going to be well prepared for our campaign. Let's go get it."



Rising star O'Sullivan joins storied Williams



O'Sullivan with Carlin dominated GB3 last year

O'SULLIVAN JOINS WILLIAMS ACADEMY AND GETS CARLIN FIA F3 RACE DRIVE

Seventeen-year-old GB3 champion joins famous team and gets F1-support chance

By Graham Keillor

Reigning GB3 champion Zak O'Sullivan has joined the Williams Formula 1 team's driver academy and will race in F1-supporting FIA Formula 3 this year staying with the Carlin team.

O'Sullivan with Carlin

claimed a dominant GB3 championship last year, wrapping up the title with two races to spare. This followed O'Sullivan narrowly missing out on the British F4 title with Carlin the previous year, his first season of single-seater racing.

The 17-year-old will for the famous multiple championship-

winning F1 team Williams conduct simulator work and provide car development feedback, with the team honing O'Sullivan's skills both as a driver and in areas such as human performance and marketing. O'Sullivan also will be 'fully integrated' into the Williams squad, both trackside and at its Grove factory.

O'Sullivan said: "This is an incredible opportunity. Williams is one of the most successful and respected teams in Formula 1 and have nurtured some of the greatest talents in the sport. I'm also so pleased to be continuing my relationship with Carlin and stepping up to FIA F3 with them this season."

Carlin boss Trevor Carlin

added: "It's clear that Williams have recognised the same talent and potential in Zak that we have and we're delighted that he has chosen to stay with us for the move up to Formula 3.

"We've enjoyed two very successful seasons together so we know exactly how much effort and dedication Zak puts into everything he does."

F4'S GRANFORS AND TAYLOR COMPLETE FORTEC GB3 LINE-UP

British Formula 4 race winners Joel Granfors and Zak Taylor are stepping up to the GB3 championship this year to complete Fortec Motorsport's line-up alongside the already announced Mikkel Grundtvig.

Taylor switches from Arden while Granfors stays with Fortec after finishing fourth in last year's British F4 table and remaining in title contention at

the finale.

Taylor said: "After looking around their facilities and completing a test it was clear that [Fortec] are the right team for me to step up."

Granfors added: "It's been a very interesting winter in many ways since I first tested the car, and we now feel confident that we've got the best possible package in place with Fortec to

fight for the championship."

Fortec's Oliver Dutton said: "We raced against Zak last year and it was clear to see that he has very high potential. His performance in testing with us has confirmed that. [Granfors] was a great asset last season and instantly on the pace again in testing this winter. His driving style is very well suited to the GB3 car."



Granfors is looking for the GB3 title after step-up



Chilton gets on and off track for role "ultimate" EV

CHILTON BECOMES SPEIRLING TESTER

Former IndyCar driver and Formula 1 pilot Max Chilton has joined McMurtry Automotive as head development driver for the company's no-rules "ultimate" electric Speirling track car.

The Speirling was unveiled at last year's Goodwood Festival of Speed where it was driven up the hill by Derek Bell. The car

then got its first round of development testing during the winter.

Chilton in his role will work closely with McMurtry engineers to develop the car as well as will drive it at numerous venues, plus will be a senior spokesperson for the company.

Chilton said: "The company is

really reaching new heights in the performance EV world. The Speirling will really show the world what performance can be achieved with all-electric power. McMurtry caught my eye last year; their professionalism and ability to invent new solutions is something I have never experienced at this level."

PORSCHE JR SMALLEY JOINS REDLINE FOR CARRERA CUP

New Porsche GB Junior will race in Carrera Cup GB this year with team that took Cammish to 2021's title

Photos: Porsche GB, Jakob Ebrey, Tim Glover



Smalley is looking to challenge at front in '22

By Graham Keillor

New Porsche GB Junior Adam Smalley will race in Carrera Cup GB this season with the Redline Racing team that won last year's drivers' championship.

The 21-year-old reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion won a four-strong final last November to become the Porsche GB Junior for 2022 and 2023, succeeding 2020 Carrera Cup GB champion Harry King.

Dan Cammish, who returns to the British Touring Car Championship this season, took last year's Carrera Cup title with Redline, and Smalley will also race in the championship's frontrunning Pro class.

Smalley told Motorsport News: "We went to Portimao for a test with Redline, just to get some mileage in the car before Christmas.

"I felt a very good connection from that start with all the staff at Redline, Simon [Leonard] who owns the team is fantastic



Smalley prevailed in four-way shootout to become latest junior

along with all of his staff. With them being reigning champions and such a successful team, I'm confident I have the right people around me to put together a competitive package.

"The title is obviously the end goal [in 2022], I'll be looking to be challenging at

the front end of the field, but I'm just going to take it round by round because there's a lot for me to take in.

"There aren't enough words to describe how good the new 992 GT3 Cup is to drive; I'm looking forward to getting back in for pre-season testing shortly".

TAYLOR TAKES TEAM HARD SCHOLARSHIP

James Taylor will race in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup with Team Hard this year after beating over 100 drivers in the team's scholarship contest to win the fully funded drive.

Thirteen drivers, whittled down from 100-plus entrants at Blyton Park late last year, contested the final at Brands Hatch last week and were assessed in VW Cup Golfs, before the top three switched to the Ginetta G55 for the final selection.

Taylor is the 2018 Ginetta Junior scholarship winner and 2019 Ginetta Junior winter series champion, but was unable to race last year due to a lack of budget.

Taylor told Motorsport News: "Competing in the scholarship was one of the most nerve-racking experiences I've had so far in my career from start to finish. From having to learn from scratch how to drive a front-wheel-drive car and using an H-pattern gearbox.

"Getting to grips with the opposite driving style of the VW Cup car was a real challenge but I really enjoyed learning how to adjust my driving style to suit."

Team Hard has also now launched its fifth scholarship in which entrants can win a fully funded season with the team in 2023's GT Cup driving a Porsche 911 GT3.



Ex-Ginetta Junior racer Taylor is back thanks to team scholarship



Trophy champ Nunn in Graves JCW move

MINI CHAMPION HARRY NUNN GRADUATES TO JCW

The 2020 Mini Challenge Trophy champion Harry Nunn will graduate to the flagship JCW class this year switching to Graves Motorsport.

Nunn, 20, won his Trophy title with AReeve Motorsport, and stayed with the team last year seeking to defend his crown and finished fourth in the table.

Graves Motorsport boss David Graves said: "The car is a big step from the Cooper, but Harry acclimatised very quickly when he tested last year. With a full testing programme ahead of the first round we expect Harry to be a leading contender for the Rookie Cup."

Ethan Hammerton meanwhile returns to Mini Challenge's JCW

class for 2022 after signing with Excelr8 Motorsport for a second year. The 21-year-old among his already extensive tin-top experience competed in the British Touring Car Championship aged 17 in 2018 and returned for two more BTCC rounds in 2020. He switched to the JCW class with a part campaign in 2020 and after a full campaign last year finished 10th in the table.

Mazda MX-5 Super Series pacesetter and GT Cup champion Joshua Jackson also makes a full-time switch into Mini Challenge JCW for 2022 with Excelr8 after a one-off outing with the team last year.

BTCC STAR COOK'S £20K HELP FOR FIESTA JUNIORS

British Touring Car Championship frontrunner Josh Cook has unveiled a 2022 Fiesta Junior racing support programme worth an initial £20,000 via his Cooksport motorsport development and race parts supply company.

For the British Racing and Sports Car Club Fiesta contest for drivers aged 14-17, Cooksport will, for those choosing to race the new next-generation Mk7 Fiesta, cover the full cost of entry fees for all race meetings in the 2022 season.

Cooksport in 2021 was appointed as development partner for the next-generation Fiesta Junior car, based on the Mk7 1.6 Ford Fiesta Zetec S model, and is sole supplier of all mandatory parts.

Cook said: "For a driver getting involved at the start of the season, this is equivalent to handing them over £4000 toward their 2022 racing expenses. Even for those that will build cars through the season to get involved later in the year, the contribution will begin as soon as they enter their first race.

"Our key project goals were to create a new Junior race car that delivered true equality in terms of on-track performance, and also to cap build costs and running expenses, and we believe we have achieved all of those aspirations.

"On completing that, I then wanted to find a way to incentivise new drivers to choose the new car as their starting point in saloon car racing."

TORO VERDE GT IN ACADEMY SWITCH

Toro Verde GT will remain in Ginetta competition for 2022 switching to the GT Academy contest with a multi-car entry.

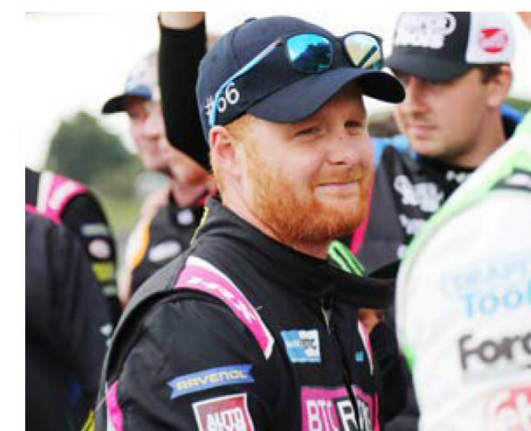
The team, which was formed ahead of last season, in 2021 raced in Ginetta's GT5 Challenge as well as entered the GT2 European Series and Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe.

Now it switches to the entry-level

Ginetta contest, and is in discussions with drivers with announcements to be made in the coming weeks.

Team manager Chris Jones said: "[Ginetta] were very welcoming, very helpful, Mark [Steel, GT5 Challenge driver] had a great time in the paddock, and that's what has encouraged us to continue with the brand in the GT Academy."

Toro Verde GT makes season-two switch

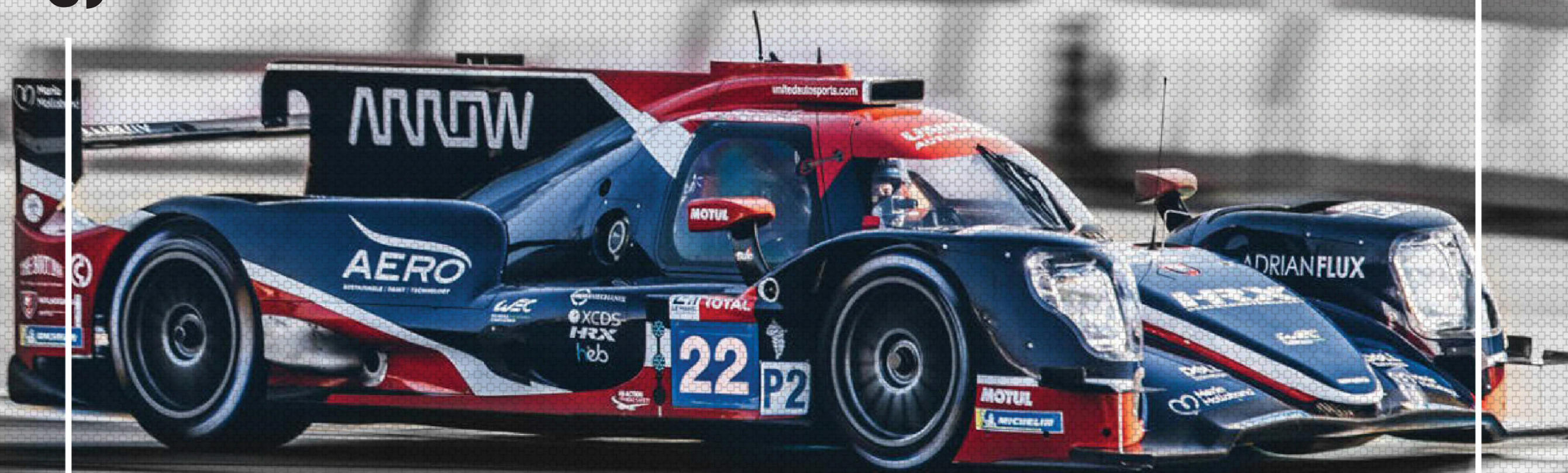


Cook: wants to help novices

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RALLY NEWS

UNCERTAINTY STILL SURROUNDS WRC'S EMPTY AUGUST CALENDAR SLOT

No round yet confirmed for mid-summer date after Northern Ireland is axed

Photos: FIAERC.com, Motorsport Images, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Barum Rally Zlin could find a spot on the 2022 line-up

By Nick Garton

The World Rally Championship's 13th calendar slot was still vacant late last week as WRC Promoter worked to find a replacement for the hoped-for Rally Northern Ireland.

Rally Northern Ireland had been set to fill the WRC's 'TBA' date of August 18-21 only for a lack of cash to put plans on hold for the second year running.

Motorsport News understands the successful candidate must stick to the same date due to various scheduling

issues, which further limits possible alternatives to what had been earmarked as the WRC's return to the UK.

However, one option could be Barum Czech Rally Zlin. While the family-run event has faced funding problems of its own in recent seasons, it's scheduled to host the penultimate round of the European championship from August 26-28, even though organisers continue to list the date as provisional.

Although this could be down to administrative reasons, there's a momentum behind the asphalt-only event joining the WRC for its 51st

edition, although there has been no official comment in support of this.

FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem's visited the rally last August during his election campaign and was accompanied by national federation president Jan Stovicek, who has subsequently joined president Ben Sulayem's first FIA World Motor Sport Council.

Barum Czech Rally Zlin, arguably one of the best sub-World championship rallies, ran as a candidate WRC event in 2005 and Stovicek showed no secret of his desire for a WRC future when



Ben Sulayem went to Zlin in 2021

quizzed by local reporters last summer.

At the time a Motorsport News source said: "The federation have seen countries like Croatia and Estonia join the WRC and they consider they have a better event and a bigger market. Mohammed Ben Sulayem was meant to take part on the Barum Rally in 1989 but never started and always said he would come back. But I don't think his visit is just for that reason."

Events in Corsica, Ypres and Monza have also been linked to the vacant World Rally Championship calendar spot.

LOUBET'S SEVEN-RALLY LINE-UP FOR M-SPORT IN 2022

Pierre-Louis Loubet's seven-round World championship campaign with M-Sport offers potential clues about what future WRC events – if any – Sebastien Loeb will contest in one of the British team's Ford Puma Rally 1s.

Loeb's Extreme E and World Rally-Raid programmes already limit the prospect of more WRC action (MN, February 3). And although M-Sport team boss Richard Millener admitted last month that Loeb's victorious Monte Carlo outing could be a one-off, the expectation remains that the 47-year-old will reappear in a Puma.

Loubet, essentially a paying driver, is understood to have taken the seat offered to Nikolay Gryazin last autumn, which Motorsport News understands was on

a shared basis with Loeb. Loubet, the son of 1989 European champion Yves, won the WRC2 title in 2019 but has struggled since stepping up to the sport's top tier. A tough 2021 campaign in a semi-works Hyundai was then curtailed when he suffered a broken hip after he was struck by a car while out walking.

The 24-year-old will contest the rounds in Croatia, Portugal, Sardinia, Estonia, Finland or the WRC's TBA event, Greece and Spain. That would potentially free up a Puma for Loeb for the Safari, Rally New Zealand and Rally Japan, although the Auckland round is one week prior to the WRC finale in Morocco.

Loubet drove an M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5 in the WRC2 in 2017.



Pierre-Louis Loubet sampled an M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5 back in 2017



The African country will remain on the WRC roster until 2026

SAFARI BOSSES INK DEAL FOR FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION

The Safari Rally will be part of the World championship until at least 2026.

It follows the signing of a three-year extension to the existing deal that was due to run out at the end of next season.

Amina Mohamed, Kenya's cabinet secretary for sports, heritage and culture and Kenya Motor Sports Federation president Phineas Kimathi were in Monaco last month to sign the new agreement with WRC Promoter.

"It's by far the longest contract we

have ever signed and this sends a strong statement," said WRC Promoter chief Jona Siebel. "After a break of 19 years there was a very strong comeback last year and there was a high motivation from both sides to make this long-term partnership happen."

It promises to be a busy year for the Kimathi family with Phineas's 27-year-old son McRae signing up for a Junior WRC bid in Fiesta Rally3, his first international campaign.



Middle East for Meeke

MEEKE BACK IN ACTION WITH QATAR OUTING

Kris Meeke is heading for a reunion on this weekend's Qatar International Rally, which the 42-year-old is contesting in a Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo run by Sports Racing Technologies.

The Northern Irishman competed on the same event with the Latvian team last season but was a non-starter on leg two due to radiator damage sustained going over a compression. He'd won three stages on day one and was in second overall prior to the issue. But while Seb Marshall co-drove Meeke on the Losail-based rally in 2021, Chris Patterson is coming out of retirement to partner Meeke on round two of the Middle East championship, something he hasn't done since Rally Australia in 2013. Meeke couldn't be reached ahead of Motorsport News going to press last week but his outing is understood to be another one-off in the MERC.

Meanwhile, Nasser Al-Attiyah, who was co-driven by Patterson between 2004-2008, is the top seed for his home round of the MERC as he chases an 80th victory in the regional championship. Norway's WRC2 champion Mads Ostberg will drive a second SRT-run Skoda in Qatar with Austrian Ilka Minor co-driving.

The Qatar International Rally runs from tomorrow (Friday) until Saturday. Thirteen stages over a competitive distance of 136 miles are scheduled.



Creighton: More JWRC

CREIGHTON EAGER FOR FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE EXPERIENCE

William Creighton reckons his learning year in Junior WRC in 2021 will aid his switch to four-wheel drive this season.

Creighton, 24, has signed up for a second Junior WRC campaign in 2022, when the one-make series from M-Sport Poland upgrades to the all-wheel-drive Ford Fiesta Rally3. "Last year was an amazing experience, I learned a lot," said the Irishman, who will be co-driven by Liam Regan. "It gives me more confidence heading into this year with the new Fiesta Rally3, it's great to make the jump."

Rally Sweden hosts the Junior WRC opener from February 24-27.

RALLY NEWS



Sloan heading back in '22

SCOTT SLOAN PLANS 2022 COMEBACK

Scottish driver Scott Sloan has registered for the BTRDA Rallye R2 Cup as he prepares a rallying return this season, having not competed since 2019.

Sloan previously contested the Junior BRC in a Peugeot 208 R2, which has now been rebuilt in preparation for a first outing on the East Riding Stages on February 27. Sloan intends to play himself in on the event before the BTRDA season begins with the Malcolm Wilson Rally in mid-March.

Sloan said: "I like the idea of a series with R2s, it's such even competition with homologated cars to roughly the same spec.

"I'm hoping that'll give us some really close racing with a lot of folk. And obviously I would like to try and do some rounds in Scotland – Coast2Coast, the Scottish and the Galloway Hills.

"It helps with the first few rounds of the BTRDA being so close, the Malcolm Wilson, Kielder and Border Counties, it's a good opportunity for us to not go too far and see how we go."

Sloan recently took the car for a run on the road but has done "absolutely nothing" apart from that in almost three years. He's therefore approaching the season with caution.

"I'm hoping it's like riding a bike and it'll just come back to me," he said, "but I'm definitely going to have to be sensible, just take it easy until we start to get into it and then hopefully some speed will come."

CHAMPION EDWARDS SIDELINED WITHOUT 2022 FIGHTING FUND

Lack of budget leaves three-time BRC title winner eyeing a season in historic rallying

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Kevin Money



Edwards set record in 2021

By Luke Barry

Three-time British Rally champion Matt Edwards is considering a programme in a historic rallying for 2022, having failed to secure the budget to contest the Irish Tarmac Championship opener in Galway or to defend his BRC title.

Edwards, who won his record-breaking title in a Melvyn Evans Motorsport Volkswagen Polo GTI R5, had hoped to continue with the same car and team this season in Ireland as the ITRC returns from lengthy hiatus. A last-minute failure to secure a sponsorship deal however leaves Edwards with no finance to compete at present.

Edwards said: "I'm looking at potentially doing something in historics which would be a bit less of a mountain to climb and maybe put a little bit more of the fun back in it in a way.

"It's not that I can't handle the pressure, but it's been ongoing and building for years and that's associated with finding the budget. Everything does take its toll eventually and I've put everything into trying to get that Irish thing and I got nothing at all towards it."

Edwards' long-term backer Yuasa has departed after realigning its marketing strategy, but the 37-year-old is frustrated to be in this position with three back-to-back British titles to his name, feeling that there should be more support from Motorsport UK.

"The system in a way should give opportunity once you've got that far really," he said. "I'm not an isolated case, people get to that level after so much hard work and there is no mechanism that takes them along from there... there's literally been nothing from a championship or Motorsport UK point of view to support the top tier in the sport. It's disappointing but it just highlights that there's an issue."

PRITCHARD'S GARAGE SALE FOR 2022

Jason Pritchard is selling his Ford Escort Mk2 and Ford Focus WRC05 as he seeks a fresh challenge in 2022.

Pritchard has been a British historic dominator and has claimed a trio of Motorsport UK Asphalt crowns in 2018, 2019 and 2021.

The Welshman is also selling his Ford Fiesta S2000, once it has been rebuilt. Once sold, Pritchard will be able to fund a new and different rally programme for 2022.

He explained: "We need to

do a change because we won the historics and I wanted a new challenge, so we went and did the Tarmac, won that three years in a row and now I want something else to set my sights on.

"We're looking to do something different, hence why the cars are up for sale and we'll see what we're left with and what's available then after [the cars go]."

The sale of Pritchard's Escort is more of a surprise due to his status as a Roger

Albert Clark Rally regular. A new partnership with Scott Williams Motorsport however means that suitable machinery is available for the event if the historic bug bites.

Pressed on what he might look to do in 2022 instead, Pritchard was tight-lipped. He said: "We've got our eye on a few things and we'll see what happens. Hopefully we'll be able to announce something before long but it's finding the car that I want and time is against us as well."



Pritchard is a force in the Ford Focus but seeks fresh challenges



McLachlans return in their Clio

McLACHLAN BACK IN ACTION

Dave McLachlan will return to the stages in 2022 after a five-year absence, co-driven by son Adam.

Having previously competed in a Mazda 323 and a Subaru Impreza, the elder McLachlan will get his first taste of front-wheel-drive action in a Renault Clio when

he starts the Questmead Stages at Three Sisters Circuit on February 20, marking Adam's first-ever competitive outing.

The family plans to contest single-venue Tarmac events, with road rally outings also under consideration for the forthcoming year.



Going for Gold: Lewis samples his new mount

LEWIS TARGETS BTRDA CAMPAIGN AS HE ACQUIRES FORD FIESTA R5

Eddie Lewis will step up to a Fiesta R5 for a season-long BTRDA Gold Star campaign after two seasons in the Junior British Rally Championship.

Lewis, who has tested the car once on asphalt, will begin his season on next month's Malcolm Wilson Rally.

He told MN: "We'll aim to do the whole BTRDA championship starting with the Malcolm Wilson. We felt this was the best and most cost-effective gravel championship out there at the moment."

On the decision to step up to R5,

Lewis added: "After a couple of years in R2/Rally4 cars we were confident we'd got enough experience to be able to take the step up to R5. Despite a lack of wins in the JBRC last year [our] overall results in the top 25 above many four-wheel-drive and R5 cars showed the pace of the championship.

"By no means are we expecting rally wins, but we want to learn as much as we can and most importantly enjoy driving such a piece of engineering."

Lewis' co-driver for the season is still to be confirmed.

XE REVEALS LINE-UP CHANGES FOR 2022

Four-time Dakar Rally winner Nasser Al-Attiyah will drive for the ABT Cupra team in Extreme E season two.

In other line-up swaps, reigning XE champion Rosberg X Racing has replaced Australian Molly Taylor with Swede Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky.

Fresh off the back of his fourth Dakar success, Al-Attiyah will return to the sand dunes of Saudi Arabia next week for his Extreme E debut, as he takes the seat of Mattias Ekstrom. Ekstrom will instead focus on other disciplines in 2022.

Al-Attiyah will partner fellow Dakar winner, German Jutta Kleinschmidt at the wheel of a renamed XE called the Cupra Tavascan.

Inaugural XE title-winner RXR has retained World RX driver Johan Kristoffersson, who will be joined by compatriot Ahlin-Kottulinsky. The Scandinavian Touring Car Championship driver previously raced for Jenson Button's JBXE squad last year and scored four consecutive podiums in the series.

"To have the chance to work with the winning team from season one is truly a great opportunity," Ahlin-Kottulinsky said.



Dakar stars united at ABT



Heart of England series will see healthy entries in 2022

NEW LOOK AND NEW CLASS FOR THE HEART OF ENGLAND

AWMMC seeks to broaden its flourishing regional championship

By Ian Harden

A new class and a new round are among the raft of changes and updates to this year's Association of West Midlands Motor Clubs' Heart of England Championship contest.

Heading the changes, the series will count crews' best six scores from the nine rounds on the 2022 calendar, which begins with the Agbo Stages on March 20 and will include a new event,

the Harlech Stages at Llanbedr airfield, on October 16.

Championship coordinator Matt Walk also announced a new class, Club Classic, intended to bridge between historic and modern machinery within the series.

To be eligible, cars must have been available for public sale before 1988 and have a type of engine fitted as original, or which was used in period.

Walk told MN: "We want to provide somewhere for cars like

Pinto-powered Ford Escorts and Vauxhall Astras Mk2s to compete against each other.

They suffered for years because of the arms race in the two-wheel-drive classes for more power, better suspension and transmissions."

As well as capacity-based classes, the championship retains Class T, introduced in 2021, for two-wheel-drive, turbocharged or supercharged cars from 1001cc to 1600cc and caters for latest-generation Hot

Hatches like Mini Coopers and Ford Focus STs. To keep costs down, remote reservoir suspension and non-factory sequential gearboxes are axed.

"These cars are popular in one-make circuit racing, so parts are available. They make value-for-money rally cars," Walk added. "We have 55 [registrations] in seven days this year. We are confident the changes we have brought in will make a competitive, friendly and popular series."

MONDELLO STEPS UP IN IRISH RALLYCROSS

Mondello Park has announced that it will promote and run the Irish Rallycross Championship for the next five years, sanctioned by Motorsport Ireland.

The Irish Rallycross series has endured a turbulent recent history, even prior to Coronavirus restrictions, putting the future of the series in doubt. The category has enjoyed better fortune in 2021 however, and bosses at Mondello Park are now looking to build.

Mondello Park managing director Roddy Greene said: "Irish rallycross has struggled over the last few years, but we hope that our investment will allow competitors, spectators and officials to once again show the reason why rallycross is one of the most intense and high-octane spectacles in motorsport."

Former British Automobile Racing Club operating officer Drew Furlong will manage the Irish RX project, having previously been involved in running the British Rallycross Championship and the British round of the World Rallycross Championship. Irish RX has also released a six-round calendar, with the mid-season June weekend set to include a round of the 5 Nations BRX series.

CALENDAR

2022 Irish Rallycross Championship

ROUND	DATE	VENUE
1	February 13	Mondello Park
2	March 6	Mondello Park
3	June 4-5	Mondello Park
4	October 30	Mondello Park
5	November 13	Mondello Park
6	December 11	Mondello Park



Mondello will be Irish RX host

ITRC BOSSES SEEK A CONTROL FUEL BEFORE 2023

Irish Tarmac Rally Championship officials insist plans to adopt an official fuel supplier remain a priority for the series before the end of the 2022 season.

The idea was first mooted by ITRC manager Paddy Flanagan with international crews last November, although concerns over the tender process and compatibility with a number of

competitors' engine mapping prevented the move.

Flanagan said: "Time was against us so we had to stop and communicate that to the crews that would have been affected by the change. I was also worried that a number of competitors would already have had deals in place with their own fuel suppliers, so it really wouldn't have been fair

to have landed something like this on them with Galway now only days away."

A control fuel, such as the British Rally Championship has employed for the past decade, eliminates the need for samples to be taken for analysis, as is currently the case.

"I would like to have this in place for 2023 come September. We see how it has worked in the

British Championship so I can't see why it wouldn't work over here," Flanagan added.

Champion Josh Moffett was among those to express reservations over the idea, fearing a rise in cost. "It's a good idea if the price is right, but that's not the case unfortunately. It would add £1.30 onto the price of a litre of fuel which I think is a joke," he said.



ITRC bosses remain keen to bring in official fuel supplier



Naylor family will get a performance boost in 2022

CHAMPION NAYLOR FAMILY AIMS HIGH IN BTRDA CONTEST

Respective reigning BTRDA Production Cup and Rally First champions Patrick and Tom Naylor are upgrading their cars for 2022.

Father Patrick will swap to a Mitsubishi Lancer E9 for a challenge in Class B13, while son

Tom is upgrading his Ford Fiesta ST150 with transmission changes, limited-slip differential and lightweight panels in order to challenge for two-litre B11 spoils.

Naylor Sr started building his new car towards the end of last

season and is confident it will be a competitive package. He said: "It is about 250kg lighter than the Group N car, it has 85 more horsepower and a sequential gearshift."

Although excited by the move up, the elder Naylor says he will miss

Group NR4. "GpN was one of the best-supported and competitive classes, but numbers have dwindled. The big advantage with Class B is we can decide how we want to modify the car rather than keeping to showroom-class rules."



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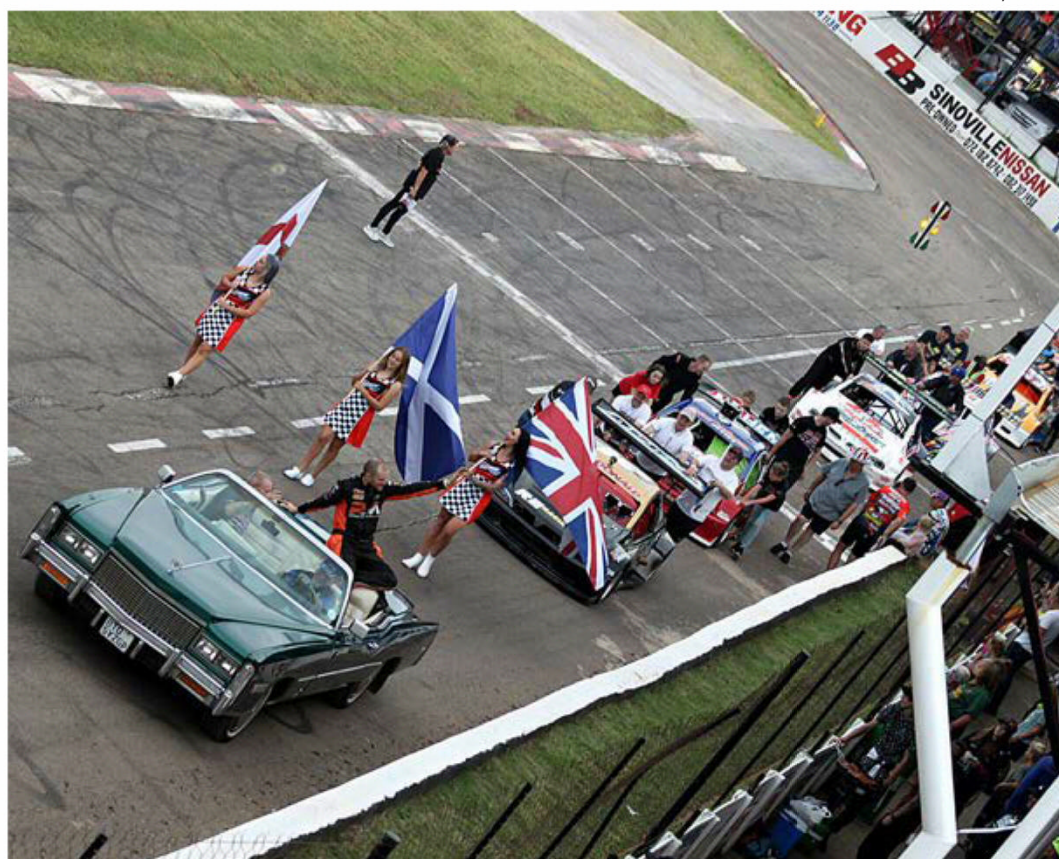
SPORTING SCENE NEWS

WOOD LEADS THE LINE FOR UK HOT ROD RUNNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Briton finishes on the points podium in traditional short oval showdown



Billy Wood managed to snare third place in the combined points



The group of British racers tackled two rounds at Mahem Raceway

Photos: Ashley Mills

By Matt James

National Hot Rod racer Billy Wood was the top UK performer in the short oval category's annual tour of South Africa which concluded on Sunday night.

Two meetings took place at the Mahem Raceway just outside Pretoria over the last two weekends and six British Isles-based drivers joined the locals for the SA vs UK Rotary World Cup Challenge.

Wood was joined on the grid by UK regulars Dick Hillard, Carl Sloan, Gavin Murray, World Final winner Rob McDonald and Derek Martin for the races.

Wood was a heat winner over the course of the events and finished third in the accumulated points standings after the two events. He finished behind Frans Joubert and Jason Loosemore. McDonald was fifth overall while Hillard was 10th. Sloan placed 12th two spots ahead of Murray, while Martin was 18th.

The English qualifying rounds for this year's National Hot Rod World Final resume with round seven at Foxhall Heath Stadium in Ipswich on March 5.



It was Germany versus France for Sweden's final showdown



Brothers in arms: Loeb and Vettel thrilled the bumper crowd

LOEB AND VETTEL ARE THE CHAMPIONS OF CHAMPIONS IN SWEDISH SHOWDOWN

Scott Mitchell watched two of motorsport's most iconic heroes battle it out for Race of Champions glory in Sweden

A reimagined 2022 Race of Champions came down to a final between two of the exhibition event's most decorated drivers and almost certainly the two biggest draws.

Sebastian Loeb and Sebastian Vettel – with just the 13 FIA World championships between them – guaranteed maximum attention for the competition's switch to a track on the frozen Baltic Sea, around 60 miles from the Arctic Circle in northern Sweden.

Switching away from asphalt was a move the drivers loved. Vettel seemed a particularly fitting finalist given how he'd embraced the event's new look. He turned heads each morning from Thursday to Sunday with solo runs in a T-shirt and shorts at sub-zero temperatures, was a willing volunteer for a winterbad when the organisers cut a hole the ice for the drivers to swim in, and begged for a passenger ride with Stig Blomqvist in the WRC legend's Audi S1 Quattro (see below).

Vettel had failed to turn his enthusiasm for the event into success in Saturday's Race of Champions. But he had a better "feel" on Sunday and saw off Emma Kimilainen (a late replacement for the absent Valtteri Bottas), Colton Herta and Tom Kristensen to come out on top of the 'racing driver' side of the draw. He admitted Loeb's path was tougher. Fresh from his stunning Monte Carlo Rally win at the start of the World Rally Championship's hybrid era, Loeb swept aside Saturday's Nations Cup winners Petter and Oliver Solberg in successive rounds then Mattias Ekstrom in the semi-final. The nine-time WRC winner didn't lose a single heat along the way, although Oliver Solberg came close to beating him – the two clocked a sensational dead heat when they faced off in the rallycross cars.

The final took place in the worst of the winter weather with increasing winds and heavy snow, and the results were quickly moving in Loeb's favour. He

won by two seconds in the Polaris buggy and three seconds in the Supercar Lite, but then shunted in the electric rallycross car, in which Vettel was also having a wild, snowbank-hitting ride.

That made it 2-1 and gave Vettel a small glimmer of hope. He came close in the fourth heat, a rematch in the Polaris, but Loeb edged it by less than a second to win the Champion of Champions for a fourth time – matching Didier Auriol as the most successful driver in the event's history.

Saturday's Nations Cup, won by the emotional father-son Solberg pairing against shock finalists Herta and Jimmie Johnson from Team USA, had been an encouraging glimpse of the added entertainment value of this contest taking place on the ice. Sunday confirmed it was a triumph. There are worse things the Race of Champions could do than make this surface switch a permanent one.

Vettel thrilled to catch a ride with the real Stig

Four-time F1 World champion Sebastian Vettel says that he begged to be driven by 1984 World Rally champion Stig Blomqvist in an Audi Quattro S1 at the Race of Champions.

Aston Martin F1 driver Vettel was one of the stars of the show as the Race of Champions returned after a two-year absence caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Vettel was bubbling after

his ride with the Swedish legend. Vettel said: "I think the car is iconic, but then to have the chance to ride with the Stig – and the proper one not the made-up one! – has been really cool.

"I'm very grateful that Stig still does these types of events and then I was begging to get into the car and I used the opportunity to go side by side. "It was magical in many

ways. So I really enjoyed it. In that car, I'm not sure I would be a passenger in a rally like the Monte Carlo or another one with the longest straights and faster corners! But it was really cool."



Vettel had a "magical" ride...

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

BARRY STEVENSON-WHEELER



Escort Mk2 rally driver

Age: 51
Lives: Syston

Rallying battler

He's a BHRC regular

"We are planning on entering all rounds of the British Historic Rally Championship this year and have been looking forward to competing on a few events we haven't done before, including the Riponian, Woodpecker and Plains."

The Escort Mk2 has gone well

"We haven't really changed the specification of the car since 2016 when we built it new with help from the boys at Rally Xtreme. It's been pretty reliable and we've had some great success, finishing sixth in the championship in 2019 and runner-up in 2021."

They have some dramas

"However, it's not always been plain sailing and we have suffered a few offs and mishaps along the way, but we always try to bounce back better. Usually, we go off early in the rally and end up setting some good times trying and fight our way back up the results."

He enjoys the atmosphere

"The historic rallying scene and championship is great as there's a good mix of very talented people spanning several rallying generations, some of whom inspired me as a kid. Also, now we have the younger lads setting the pace and even winning. There's a really good buzz in the service park between the crews, no matter how old or where they are from and it's one of the things that makes me want to carry on with it."

It's in the family

"I have been going to Loughborough Car Club since I was about 10-years old. My dad and my uncle Brian did lots of servicing as well as competing in road rallies in a Mk1 Escort. Fast forward to when I was about 20 and I entered a few road rallies myself. I am currently the president and chairman of the club which is a great honour."

He tackles autosolos

"My friend Will Herbert is a very autotest competitor. During the winter LOCC and Mid Derbyshire MC jointly run a winter series of autosolos at Donington. I'm lucky that Will lets me share his Raw Striker. I must admit that it is a challenge to get near Will's times as he's quick. Apart from having a great day out I like meeting the new up and coming competitors starting out as young as 14."



Pre-1983 cars will form a new competition

NEW PRE '83 TOURING CAR SERIES TO OPEN UP RACING OPTIONS

Category to kick off with Vince Woodman memorial race at Combe

By Paul Lawrence

The promoters of the GT and Sports Car Cup are planning to expand by developing a new race series for Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars.

Automobiles Historiques will move into a crowded marketplace and go head-to-head with Motor Racing Legends by running a pilot race at this year's Castle Combe Autumn Classic ahead of a four

or five event series in 2023.

The 45-minute Castle Combe race will honour the memory of local ace Vince Woodman, who won 12 races in period in his Esso-liveried Ford Capri.

Group 1 Touring Cars, as used in the British Saloon Car Championship in period, have enjoyed a renaissance in recent years due to the popularity of Gerry Marshall Trophy race at Goodwood.

Away from Goodwood, MRL's

Historic Touring Car Challenge has been the prime home for the cars, sharing the grid with the later and more powerful Group A cars of the mid-to-late 1980s. The option to avoid racing alongside slick-shod Ford Sierra RS500s is one of the selling points of the new series.

Additionally, Group 1 cars have been able to race in the Classic Touring Car Racing Club's Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Car Championship

and the HSCC's Dunlop Saloon Car Cup.

"The Gerry Marshall Trophy always produces spectacular racing," says Flavien Marçais of Automobiles Historiques. "The following is growing but having made the investment many owners now want to compete more often, against cars of similar performance, with the same tyres on a level playing field. That's what we are offering."



Modsports men can aim for trophy in honour of Fletcher, above

Heroes get tributes with new HSCC category

Peter Baldwin and Jon Fletcher will be honoured by the new Modsports and Saloons category from the Historic Sports Car Club.

The two stars of the late 1960s and early 1970s have given support to the initiative to recreate a period of national racing history. Interest in the new category is building well and in the week following the announcement around 20

drivers with suitable cars registered interest.

Drivers in the Saloon classes will compete for the Peter Baldwin Trophy to celebrate his success in Special Saloon Minis.

Those racing in the Modsports classes, meanwhile, will compete for the Jon Fletcher Trophy to recall his many successes in his Lotus Elan.



Gott's famous car is a star at Silverstone

GOTT'S AUSTIN HEALEY GOES ON DISPLAY

The famous ex-John Gott Austin Healey 3000 is currently a star exhibit at the Silverstone Interactive Museum.

The racer, always known by its 'SMO 746' registration, enjoyed many club racing successes at Silverstone

through the 1960s until Gott's death in 1972.

The former rally driver was appointed Chief Constable of Northamptonshire in 1960 and moved his focus to racing the 1959 Healey.

In more recent times, the Healey has been restored for

racing by Denis Welch Motorsport and new owner Mark Holme has continued to win with the car, usually co-driven by Jeremy Welch.

The museum is open from 1000hrs to 1600hrs from Monday to Sunday via advance tickets.

IN BRIEF

Goodwood innovates

The theme for the 2022 Goodwood Festival of Speed (June 23-26) will be 'the innovators – masterminds of motorsport'. The hillclimb will pay tribute to the engineers, designers, drivers and others who delivered milestones like twin-cam engines, supercharging and active aerodynamics. The plan is to celebrate the most incredible leaps forward that took racing from 40mph with poisonous fuels to 200mph with zero emissions.

Safari Classic is go

The 10th East African Safari Classic Rally will start today (Thursday) from Naivasha in Kenya. A field of 48 cars, which includes an incredible team of 14 Porsche 911s from Team Tuthill, will set out to tackle 1200 competitive miles across eight days of typical African rallying. Star drivers include American Ken Block and 2019 winner Kris Rosenberger who are both part of the Tuthill squad.

Porsche wins Monte

Belgian twins Phillippe and Antoine Cornet de Ways Ruart emerged as overall winners in this year's Rallye Monte Carlo Historique. Their 1960s Porsche 911 took the lead on the final morning and held on to their advantage though the final night section to the finish in Monte Carlo. It was the 24th edition of the challenging regularity rally, though the 2022 event only featured snow on the highest sections of the route.

Tralee gets full

The Deja vu Tralee retro rally event in Ireland on May 27-28 is filling up fast, with 130 of the available 150 places now taken. The seventh event in the series of rally reunions run by Beatty Crawford and Plum Tyndall will be based in Tralee, County Kerry. Notable early entries include five-time Irish Tarmac Champion Austin MacHale in his Group A Toyota Celica. The previous six non-competitive tours have raised more than £150,000 for charity.

Haycock's outing

Aaron Rix and Abi Haycock will contest the historic class of their local event, the Snetterton Stages Rally on February 19. Haycock is the partner of current BHRC champion Ben Friend but will co-drive for fellow East Anglian Rix in his Ford Escort Mk1 on the next round of the MN Circuit Rally Championship. Friend co-drove for Rix on the Cambrian Rally last October in an Ford Escort Mk2.

Siddall leads the line

Half a dozen British drivers are on the start list for the East African Safari Classic Rally. Event regular Andrew Siddall will return to Africa with his Datsun 280Z, run by the Dansport team. The second Dansport entry is a 240Z for local driver Geoff Bell.



Siddall will take on the Safari

COLUMNIST

NICK GARTON

*A change is as good as a rest for the motorsport soul*

Photos: Motorsport Images

Working in any sport risks taking for granted those very things that make it special to millions. With a long season ahead in 2022, it's important to step back and simply be a fan once again.

Most of my fellow journalists prefer music or football as their way to unwind, but for me it's the comings and goings of the NASCAR Cup.

North Carolina's finest will contest 36 points-scoring weekends (plus the big money All-Star Race), in what may appear an alien world to our own, but which shares many similarities, whether we choose to admit it or not.

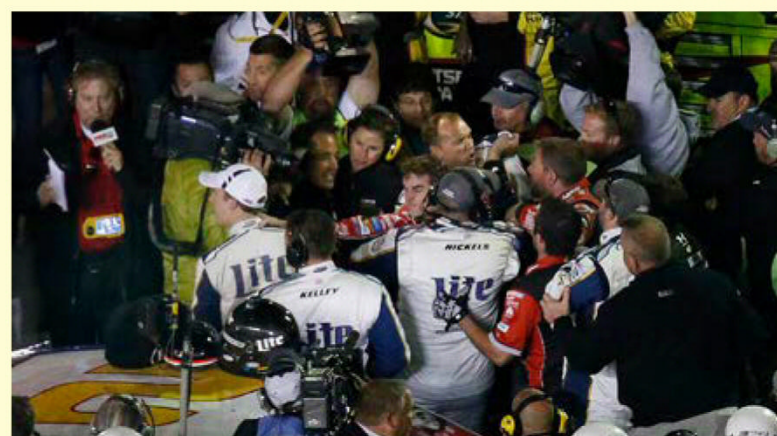
Motorsport types on this side of the Atlantic generally take a dim view of NASCAR. The default insult that gets used for anything from a perceived drop in driving standards to an absence of cutting-edge technology is that a series is becoming 'like NASCAR' – as though the very suggestion will spur the powers-that-be into corrective action.

That's a lack of understanding comparable with saying that all Formula 1 cars are the same and that the races are dull processions. In all disciplines of motorsport there is nuance, strategy and unbelievable skill on display. The sheer physics involved in getting a ton-and-a-half of car to rotate cleanly through the banking at 180mph are mind-blowing, for example. Doing it four abreast with the air trying to push you one way and the tyres scrabbling to go another is poetry in motion.

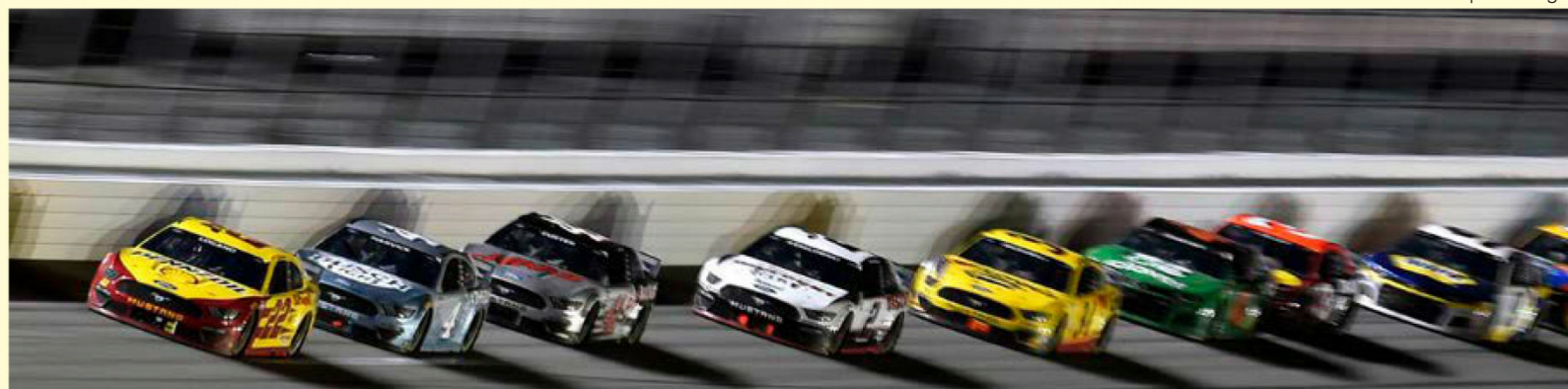
Despite our differences, the NASCAR community has a refreshing fondness for our style of motorsport. I recently interviewed Penske's rising star Austin Cindric about the year he spent living on a stage of Rally Sweden while competing in Global Rallycross in a Ford Fiesta. He loved it so much that he's bought a 1993 Volvo estate, just like the one he drove while living and working around Torsby.

Not everything translates well to NASCAR types. Putting the top three finishers together on a podium? Well, that might get ugly after a last corner bump-and-run. F1's current vogue for allowing team principals a hotline to race control also causes head-scratching.

"They literally say: 'That was Max's corner' or: 'That was Lewis's corner'," chuckles TJ Majors,



Pitlane pugilism is part of the NASCAR game



The sights, sounds and pageantry of the Daytona 500 will ignite a new era for NASCAR Cup this month

spotter for Brad Keselowski (the 2012 champion's eyes and ears when on track). "C'mon, I mean... it's a race!"

This year there is the arrival of NASCAR's seventh generation of cars to evolve since 1949, bringing with it many similarities with the World Rally Championship's new Rally1 machinery. No, there is no hybrid component (yet – although one is anticipated soon and, with it, the arrival of Honda), but there is a standard spaceframe with bolt-on composite panels replacing the last sheet metal shells, which were retired last year.

Other new technology includes a sequential gearbox and the replacement of 15-inch steel wheels (and their five retaining bolts) for GT3-style 18-inch alloys with a single racing nut. Every component except the engine must be sourced from the approved suppliers rather than having teams fabricate their own, which is intended to strike a double blow to costs and the creation of a notional level playing field – again, something in common with the WRC and almost every major European series.

Whether or not this can be achieved within the culture of NASCAR, where being known to have the Zen-like skill of "cheatin' up a race car" is a badge of honour, remains to be seen.

In the words of the sport's most popular driver, Dale Earnhardt Jr: "If my crew chief can tell me, hand on heart, that his car complies with every regulation... I have no interest in driving it. You want the guy who's building your car to be pushing the envelope and innovating at every race."

One subtlety with NASCAR is to always look out for the teams that get penalised in pre-race scrutineering. Accepted wisdom is that you try to put between five and 10 infringements into the car when it goes in for official inspection, making the least important

tweaks a little more obvious. If the scrutineers focus on these, they'll often overlook the really good stuff.

For example, Chase Elliott got thrown to the back of the grid by the scrutineers at the 2020 season finale. Sure enough, despite starting in 39th place, Elliott led 153 of 312 laps to claim the crown. The difference between over there and over here is that, rather than lodging a protest, rival teams tend to doff their hats.

NASCAR wears its traditions and heritage on its sleeve, its drivers, engineers and officials coming from long lines of fathers, uncles and grandfathers who did this before them.

Today's talent such as Cindric, Elliott, Ryan Blaney and last year's champion Kyle Larson may be better groomed and more media savvy out of the car, but each retains the time-honoured feistiness of the good ol' boys of yore.

X-rated tirades over the radio, applying the 'chrome horn' to the rear of the car in front and occasional fisticuffs on pitroad remain firmly part of the show. All of which is infinitely more satisfying to watch for a fan than a frosty silence in the post-race press conference.

Being a NASCAR fan on this side of the pond has traditionally been something you keep under your hat in polite company, like which way you voted on Brexit. But that is now changing.

The NASCAR Fans UK Facebook page boasts 6500 members who watch races together online, as well as adopting a driver at each round of the Xfinity and Truck Series support races, putting a Union flag sticker on their car to give Brits someone to cheer for.

As Rockingham proved, attempts to bring the spectacle here would be futile... we have more than enough of our own sport to go around. But enjoying the Cup in its natural environment, even at a distance, is still something fun to do on a Sunday evening.

After last weekend's pre-season Clash at the LA Coliseum begins the new generation's first Speedweeks at Daytona. This fortnight-long residency at the fabled 2.5-mile superspeedway culminates in the blue riband 500-mile race on February 20. One day Lewis Hamilton hopes to be among the starting line-up, which would indeed be something special to see.

So, if you're thirsting for the start of our own season, why don't y'all check out what's happening in Florida in the days ahead?



New cars for 2022 bring GT and WRC tech to Cup

"As Rockingham proved, attempts to bring the spectacle here would be futile..."

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FIA says it could install a new grand prix race chief in time for 2022 opener in March

MASI TIPPED TO LOSE ROLE AS FORMULA 1 RACE DIRECTOR



By Matt James

Bosses of grand prix racing have hinted that Michael Masi's reign as Formula 1 race director could be over after the controversy surrounding the final race of the year in Abu Dhabi last December.

The governing body has launched a review into the dying moments of the 2021 campaign when two rules regarding the deployment of the safety car and the restart of the race were not followed correctly. The upshot was that Red Bull's Max Verstappen was able to overtake Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton on the last lap to claim his first World Championship.

The FIA's new head of F1 Peter Bayer said: "Michael did a superb job in many ways. We have told him that. But also, there is the possibility there could be a new race director."

The FIA is due to report to teams next week on changes to the safety car regulations to make sure this type of incident does not happen again. Hamilton has threatened to walk away from grand prix racing if the situation remains unchanged.

Full report page 4

Masi: removed?



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FEATURE

CAN FERRARI TURN ITS FORTUNES AROUND?

*As the Formula 1 car launch season gets underway, **James Roberts** explains why there is a significantly revised machine from Maranello for 2022*



Ferrari is aiming to get its cars back to the top of Formula 1



Mattia Binotto says the focus switched to 2022 quite some time ago

Picture the scene. On a bright but cold winter's morning, Gilles Villeneuve and Jody Scheckter are standing on part of the Fiorano test track, on the outskirts of Maranello. Gilles, cool as ever, in an open-necked shirt and jacket. While Jody sports a black tie and matching Crombie.

Agip-branded bunting surrounds them and the T5, the new Ferrari the pair will drive in the 1980 Formula 1 season. A small huddle of photographers click away at the scarlet machine, as the two drivers joke and chat. The hopes at the reigning champion are high.

Next to them, designer Mauro Forghieri keeps warm in a brown, sheepskin coat, while Enzo – in trademark dark sunglasses – is all smiles. This is how car reveals used to be.

It's a world away from today's lavish launches that feature live streaming, flashing light shows and close-ups of sponsor stickers, where the teams say an awful lot, while giving little away. The 2022 Formula 1 launch season is upon us and this year you can expect more fanfare than ever before.

In fairness, there is much anticipation over the new cars that will be unveiled in the next fortnight. Not only are they the first new machines for two years, but with such a sweeping overhaul of the technical regulations – arguably the

biggest ever – the cars will look significantly different to what we have been used to. Bigger wheels, aggressive-looking aerodynamics and individual interpretations that could impact the competitive order.

Traditionally Ferrari hasn't fared well when there has been a reset in the rules. After losing the drivers' championship at the final corner of the 2008 season, the following year was a disaster for the Scuderia as it slipped to fourth overall when the FIA slashed downforce and reduced the width of the cars. The same was true at the commencement of the 1.6-litre V6 turbo-hybrid era in 2014... Fourth again. So why will this year be any different?

The reasons for Ferrari's poor run of form going into 2022 are oddly linked to its last major car launch. Two years ago to the day, I landed in Bologna to be greeted with the bizarre sight of medical officials, wearing masks, checking the temperature of every passenger who disembarked from the aircraft. Little did we know of the outbreak that was about to unfold.

Ferrari was launching its new car, the SF1000, at an historic theatre in the picturesque town of Reggio Emilia, just 20 miles from its Maranello base. Crowds gathered outside the 19th-century building that was bathed in red, green and white floodlights. Broadcast live on Italian television it felt like an event of national significance. The equivalent of say, Williams unveiling its

new car at the Royal Albert Hall.

But for all the pride in the red machine that would uphold the honour of Italy, the events in that region would quickly take on a global, rather than national, significance. The area was the first to suffer badly with the pandemic and before we knew it, the world was in lockdown.

When racing resumed again in the summer of 2020, it was clear Ferrari had a problem. At Monza, the performance deficit was stark. It was the team's worst grid position at the Temple of Speed since the mid-1980s: 13th and 17th. This was supposed to be a time of great celebration, as Mugello a week later would host the marque's 1000th F1 race start. However, there was little cheer and Ferrari slumped to sixth overall in the constructors' standings.

Having been second to Mercedes in three of the previous four years, this was a dramatic fall from grace. In fact it was it was Maranello's lowest finishing position since Gilles and Jody raced the T5 in 1980...

What had happened? The secret lay in that Monza qualifying session and the loss in top speed. Rewind 12 months to September 2019 and Charles Leclerc had recorded his first win for the team at Spa and immediately repeated the feat at Monza. Throughout the latter half of that year, the Ferrari SF90 amassed six pole positions in a row and clinched a 1-2 finish at Singapore. It was the last time Ferrari won a grand prix, some 45 races ago.

Photos: Motorsport Images



The new regulations will present a fresh start



Ferrari's nadir came at its home GP in 2020

Although the details of the deal were kept behind closed doors, the FIA had made a series of technical directives at the end of 2019 that hindered the power output of the Ferrari engine. As a result, the impact of the FIA's ruling significantly affected the top speed of the 2020 machine.

To try and negate the problem, downforce was taken off the car in a bid to reduce drag and improve straightline speeds, but that further hindered performance. Then the impact of the pandemic meant the compromised 2020 car was carried over into last season.

"Finishing sixth in the championship was the worst performance for Ferrari in the last 40 years. It was very poor, both on the straights and in the corners," says team boss Mattia Binotto. "But finishing third in 2021 is encouraging. It shows the team is capable of addressing weaknesses and developing the car."

Ferrari's development over the course

of last year can be a sign of genuine belief as it appears all of last season was focused on the 2022 car. Ironically, the team's poor sixth place in 2020 might have played a part in any future upswing in performance. The reason is tied to the introduction of the financial cap into F1. Traditionally the oldest marque in the sport has enjoyed one of the biggest budgets, but like all big teams is now forced to limit spending.

Part of the regulatory change to help the smaller, under-resourced teams close the performance deficit to the front, has been to offer a sliding scale of development time based on a team's finishing position in the championship.

By finishing sixth, it meant Ferrari could spend more time developing its car last year than both Mercedes and Red Bull. It worked out at nearly 170 more windtunnel runs and over 1000 more CFD simulation items. And because Ferrari was not fighting for a

championship last year, it could shift all of its resources onto its 2022 machine.

"We identified 2022 as our top priority, so no compromises have been made in developing the 2022 car," adds Binotto. "The reason is quite obvious. It's a new era in terms of the regulations and knowing that we are behind compared to the best competitors is why it was really important for us to focus on the future. So we have compromised part of 2021. We addressed a few issues on car behaviour at the very start, but then stopped completely development to focus on 2022. Except on the power unit..."

As a former engine engineer to Michael Schumacher, Binotto knew how critical it was to reclaim back performance in this area. And crucially, power unit development will be frozen at the first race of 2022, until the end of this engine formula at the end of 2025. As a result, there was a significant focus

on the development of the power unit over the course of 2021. By Sochi a new hybrid system was introduced onto the car and Binotto has revealed work has also been carried out on developing a new V6.

"Believe me, the 2022 power unit has a lot of innovation in it," says Binotto. "The way the entire engineering team has faced the new design and new regulations is certainly with a more open mind than before."

When asked to clarify the details, Binotto went on to explain that the introduction of a new fuel for this year – which is 10 per cent ethanol – has reduced combustion by around 20 horsepower. He then described the Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) as "significantly different" implying that between the engine department in Italy and the work carried out in Shell's Hamburg laboratory, they have been able to negate that loss of combustion and increase power.

In addition to the Scuderia's work on revising the V6 there has also been a lot of revisions "under the bodywork" according to Binotto. With his design team's "open mind" in regards to the new-for-2022 car concept it means there has been "significant innovations" in terms of layout of the suspension design and architecture of the car.

"The new regs are a clear opportunity. The hope is to be competitive and that is to be in the position of winning races. Would that mean that we can fight for a championship? The gap is still big,

but as Ferrari, it's part of our DNA," says Binotto. "What is important is to be capable of fighting at least in some races for poles and wins."

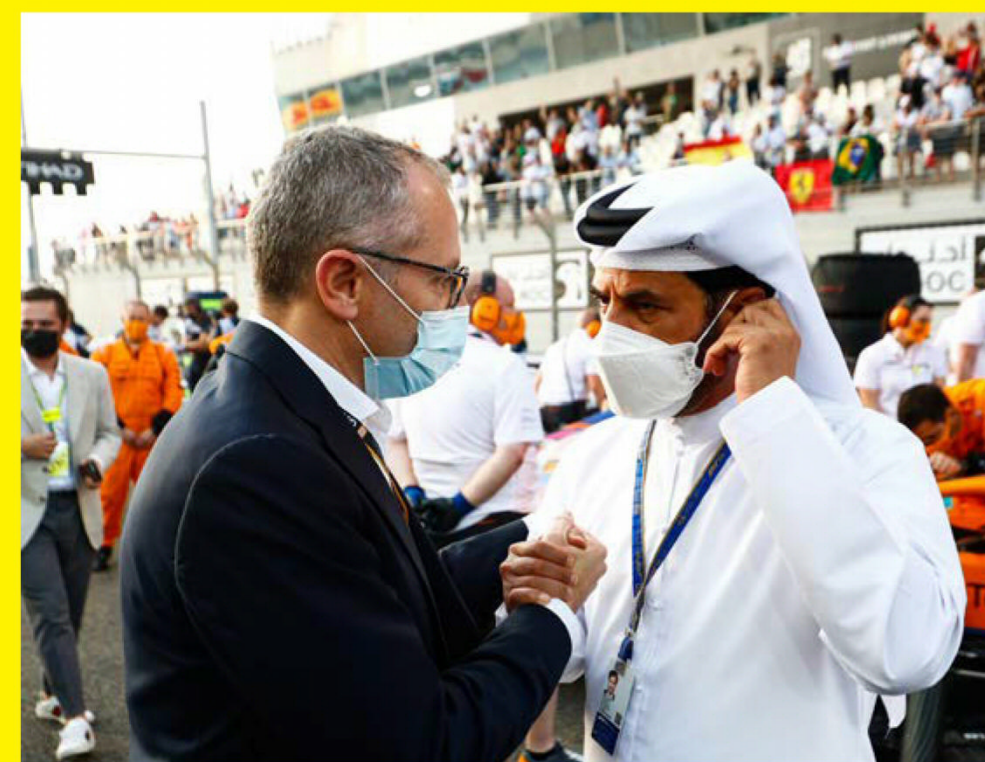
Once again the youthful line-up of Leclerc and Carlos Sainz will be photographed next to the car when the SF-75 (named to honour the 75th anniversary of the first production car, the 125 S, to leave the factory) is unveiled to the world on February 17.

Leclerc is arguably the quicker of the two, but is still prone to making the odd mistake, while Sainz brings an intelligent, dutiful work ethic to the team. Equally stylish, in many ways the pair are reminiscent of the 1980 partnership of Villeneuve and Scheckter. The current drivers enjoy a close and respectful working relationship and – like their predecessors – are closely matched in performance.

After Scheckter won the title in 1979, it took Ferrari 21 years to reclaim the crown with Schumacher. It's now been 15 years since Kimi Raikkonen's clinched the drivers' championship, as subsequent attempts by Fernando Alonso and Sebastian Vettel fell short.

For the many Ferrari fans, in both Italy and around the world, they will be hoping that it won't take as long to reach the top, as it did in the barren period of the 1980s and '90s.

The signs are looking good, but we won't truly know until the opening Formula 1 round of the season in Bahrain on March 20... ■



Domenicali (left) has links to Ferrari but Ben Sulayem doesn't...

Promoter versus regulator: Ferrari's links to F1's bosses

It's been an odd curiosity that the leader posts of the twin powers of the sport, Liberty Media-owned F1 and governing body FIA, have both been held by the two men who led the Ferrari's domination of the sport in the 2000s.

Jean Todt's tenure as FIA president came to an end in December, while Ross Brawn, 67, is believed to be considering stepping aside from a full-time role when his current deal comes to an end – with some reports suggesting that could be later this year.

Last season another former Ferrari boss, Stefano Domenicali, was appointed the CEO of Formula 1, while at the FIA, Mohammed Ben Sulayem has been elected the president.

Ferrari's current boss Mattia Binotto praised the work Domenicali has done in his new role of promoter,

saying: "Since Liberty Media have started they have improved the show a lot and the way they communicate it to the fans."

The changes to the cars in 2022 was partly a joint F1/FIA exercise, led by Pat Symonds at F1 and Nikolas Tombazis at the FIA. But the challenge for the incoming FIA president is to make a clear delineation between the promoter and regulatory body.

The blurred lines between the two arguably led the sport towards its catastrophic last-lap title decider in the Abu Dhabi finale.

Divisions in roles between London and Geneva will need to be enacted and the F1 teams will be hoping Ben Sulayem will take positive action to ensure the sport retains its credibility as a sporting contest while continuing its joint role as entertainment.



Speed demons: Sainz and Leclerc

"The team has faced the rules with an open mind"

Mattia Binotto



Last win was in Singapore 2019

FEATURE



THE BRITS WHO TOOK ON EUROPE TO BECOME THE NEXT RALLY STAR

*Four British talents made the FIA Rally Star European final. Here's how they all fared. By **Luke Barry***

The pressure was on in German showdown



Nothing left on the table: the young hopefuls had to battle 88 rivals to make an impact on the FIA

It's well documented that there aren't many opportunities to progress in rallying – certainly not compared to what there used to be with manufacturer-backed one-make series and scholarships. So when the FIA announced its Rally Star initiative, it's no surprise that plenty of UK talent jumped at the chance.

BTRDA regulars Rob Wilson and George Lepley, McLaren GT racer Katie Milner and rising WRC esports star John Bebnowicz-Harris all attended the UK final back in October and were selected to represent Motorsport UK at the European final on the last weekend in January. Held at Estering in Germany, the Brits were four of some 89 competitors all competing in LifeLive TN5 buggies for the prize of a 2023 season in Junior WRC.

To stand a fighting chance of competing against such strong opposition, Motorsport UK arranged several training exercises in the lead-up to the event including a seminar, fitness training, sim-racing practice of the circuit they'd be competing on, a day at Phil Price Rally School and then finally a day in RX150 buggies to get a feel of the type of vehicle they'd be driving. That day was particularly useful just a week out from the European final and provided Bebnowicz-Harris – who was stuck in France working and unable to travel back for other training due to Covid-19 rules – a crucial chance to experience some real-life driving.

"In October 2021 I still didn't have a car or my driving licence, so it was going to be quite the leap of faith into the unknown," he tells MN. "In hindsight this session in the buggy was necessary just for safety as driving a crosskart with absolutely no driving experience is a

recipe for disaster more often than not."

His team-mates had a higher base level of experience, but it was still invaluable training for Wilson as he'd never driven anything rear-wheel drive before training while Milner had never driven on gravel. Each driver was therefore feeling as prepared as they could, but what would the strategy be?

Wilson says: "We had a briefing and they said 'we're going as a team from Motorsport UK to the final, you're representing Motorsport UK, but realistically you are competing against each other so if you don't want to share information or give tips you don't have to'. But obviously it's beneficial to each other to be open so we were all very open and we're all very good friends now and went through it all and always gave each other advice. Even up to the final we were giving each other advice so it was really, really good."

The competition was split into three phases. Stage one divided the field into nine groups of 10 where only the top three fastest – based on the driver's quickest lap time from three laps – from each group progressed to the second stage. Wilson, Milner and Lepley all made it through but sadly Bebnowicz-Harris's journey ended there.

"My aim going into the event was simple: with so many experienced people competing I just wanted to be in the mix," he says. "However, that view did change before I got into the car and my plan altered itself by default to survival mode. The first run was a bit shaky as can be expected. I locked up at an absurdly slow pace on Tarmac that felt like an ice-rink and nudged the barrier, but no harm done."

"My second run went smoothly as I just wanted to set a banker time so I could at least see if my driving had



The young hopefuls gathered at Estering in Germany for a punishing two-day assessment programme



Buggies were part of the driving examination

improved since the test. On my third and final run I decided to go for it, the first time I had the confidence to do so, but unfortunately out of one corner I went for third gear and got a box full of neutrals for 2-3 seconds, it felt like an eternity. I was happy – I think I surprised myself first and foremost – until I found out I had missed out on the next round by 0.2 seconds with my last run. Gutted doesn't quite describe it.”

To add insult to injury, Bebnowicz-Harris's second chance to qualify on the simulator was also thwarted as “the simulator wasn't suitable for short people such as me” which made the set-up less than ideal. But he missed out by another minute margin, just 0.6s. Mood was happier elsewhere in the camp though as Milner had accomplished one of her key objectives.

“I was saying to Katie [Baldwin] who came with us from Motorsport UK, there's no point in me having a target of just winning the women's final and going through like that, I wanted to qualify on merit against the boys which I did in stage one where I qualified third and that put me straight into stage two,” she says. “And in theory all the other girls got knocked out in stage one, so I was really happy.”

Milner carried that same ambition into

the second stage – where each driver would get just two runs with those two times added together for an overall time like on a stage rally. But it didn't go as planned. “I just came round this corner a bit too quick,” Milner recalls. “I set it up really nice on the way in and I thought ‘this is good just keep your foot in’ and I think the camber changed it as it just snapped into understeer, and by that point I was a little bit too wide to be able to save it with the handbrake or anything and I just went into the brick wall on the outside and broke one of the steering arms. I was really annoyed at myself that that had happened but then I couldn't really blame myself as I was giving 110% effort.”

Wilson and Lepley – who was quickest in his group – were pitted against each other in stage two where only the top two would progress to the final. “It was either we both got through or one of us knocked each other out or none of us got through, so it wasn't the best situation,” admits Wilson. “We were all a bit disappointed by that.” But delays to the schedule were also beginning to take their toll. With accidents as early as the first day delaying proceedings, Wilson and Lepley took to the track on Sunday instead of Saturday and had just one lap to count instead of the intended two. This is where Lepley's

event unravelled, and the pain in his voice is clear even several days afterwards when he speaks to MN.

“Basically the brakes were binding,” Lepley says. “The rear-brake disc was bent against the caliper so as soon as you pulled the handbrake or pressed the brake really hard it was sticking on and just wasn't able to go back. I said ‘I can't do a run if my brakes are binding on’ but they were like ‘well we don't have much choice because we're running out of time, so you've just got to do it.’ So I did my flying lap, it was going alright but then about halfway round I came up to the chicane and the revs died and I was like ‘oh no I'm in the wrong gear.’ I thought maybe I was in second gear not in first so I went to try and select first gear but I was in the first gear, but still no difference. ‘Aw great I know what's happened, the brakes are stuck on.’

“I ended up going down the straight pressing the brake pedal like five or six times and then all of a sudden they freed themselves off and off I went. Obviously I was frustrated as hell when I finished my run, and then to find out I'd missed out by 0.7s was like ‘you've got to be kidding me.’ It must have cost me 1-2s and I think that's being extremely generous. It was just one of those situations where I didn't



Katie Milner (l) has qualified for the finals in America later this year

know what to say. It's so disheartening especially when these opportunities are so few and far between and it's such an incredible opportunity, it feels like my one and only golden ticket has been ripped from beneath me. Pretty hard to accept but I haven't got much of a choice.”

Wilson admits “we all felt for George at that point” but he had done his job. Second quickest, 0.2s off the ultimate pace, booked him a spot in the final where it wasn't just down to speed but also what the jury – consisting of Robert Reid, Thierry Neuville, Malcolm Wilson, Pernilla Solberg and Terenzio Testoni no less – garnered from a sit-down interview and analysing driving techniques.

Despite a small half-spin Wilson “was feeling quite good about my runs, I'd given it my all” before he sat down with the jury – something he describes as “quite a surreal experience with Thierry on my left and Malcolm Wilson on my right and them asking me questions”. Estonian Romet Jurgenson ultimately won but Wilson found it “incredible to even be there”.

“To make it through the first stage I was completely shocked and that was amazing, to get into the final 12 I hoped I'd get that far but didn't expect to get that far and that was just incredible. So as far as

that goes I'm still buzzing off the high of making it to the final 12 of the European final which is something I'm sure I'll be saying for quite a long time,” he adds.

“The guy that won was the deserving winner, he was the quickest, and I'm glad about that because if it was picked just off the jury and the times were the same, I'd have felt a bit more disappointed. But he deserved to win, I'm not disappointed by that.”

Although he won't be in the JWRC, Wilson plans to progress into the BTRDA Gold Star and Welsh championship this season which is “another reason why I'm not overly disappointed. I made sure I had plans for this year so if I didn't win it wasn't like I was left with nothing. I'm just happy to be where I've been and done what I've done now.”

The biggest celebrations were reserved for Milner though. Despite being knocked out of stage two of the whole competition, she had qualified for the women's final and would up joint-winner with Sweden's Maja Hallen Fellenius – advancing to the world final held in north America this August. Her father Jonny was unsurprisingly delighted and impressed with her performance.

“It's a very proud moment for dad, mum, and sisters [but] it was probably the worst two and a half hours of my life nearly on Sunday waiting to see if she was through!” Jonny tells MN. “She'll knuckle down, work hard and there's so many things in rallying to get her head around but she's more of a level head than her crazy dad. She thinks about things way more than I ever did. She's measured with her racing, she's measured with this and I mean fair play to her what pressure all the girls were under in Germany. She did us all proud.”

There's not much more for us to add, is there? ■



Lepley was gutted after car woe



Neuville was among the judges

“It was amazing to make it that far”

Rob Wilson



Rob Wilson proves his fitness

FEATURE



Paffett has found a new Formula E role

GARY PAFFETT

I SEIZED ALL MY CHANCES FOR SUCCESS

Matt James puts the Motorsport News readers' questions to the king of the DTM

Britain is the second most successful nation in terms of DTM winning drivers behind the motherland itself, and most of those triumphs have been down to one man: Gary Paffett.

The two-time tin-top champion in Germany is fourth on the all-time winners' list himself and was a mainstay of the category for 15 years.

It is an impressive record that can sometimes go overlooked in his homeland. Paffett is an unassuming racer who grabbed all the chances that came his way to climb the motor racing ladder.

He was on the brink of a Formula 1 drive on more than one occasion and was the architect of Lewis Hamilton's success with his role as a test and development driver for the McLaren team. The dream never came true for the Bromley man but, as he puts it, there was little more he could have done in his career to be considered for a Formula 1 seat.

Since 2019, he has been a regular in the Formula E paddock and is now the team manager of the title-winning Mercedes-Benz squad. He might not be behind the wheel, but he is still collecting trophies.

He kindly took time out of his schedule after the opening Formula E rounds in Saudi Arabia to tackle the MN readers' questions.

Question: How did you discover karting and motorsport in general?
Dean Matthews
Via email

Gary Paffett: "Although I was born in Bromley, we moved to Devon when I was relatively young – so that was even further away from the major race tracks! My dad owned the village petrol station in a place called Spreyton on the hills of Dartmoor.

"My dad Jim has a passion and interest

in motorsport. He used to race lots of things just for fun at club level. He did some saloon car stuff, 210 Villiers karts, gearbox karting, all sorts. Him and his mate would go off racing on the weekends. He would go off and watch Formula 1 races, all sorts of things.

"That is where the seeds of my interest were planted. I probably did go racing with him, but I don't remember it. When I was eight years old, my dad bought me a kart. The local track was about an hour away at Dunkeswell and the next nearest one was a couple of hours and that was Clay Pigeon. Anything beyond that was a long way away.

"At the start, it was racing like he did it: just for the enjoyment and the fun we would be able to have together. We weren't looking at it as a career option, that is not what it was about."

Question: What else would you have been if not a race driver?

Jack Crowther

Via email

GP: "That's really difficult, because when you do something from such a young age and you do it for so long, it is hard to know any different. I think if I hadn't made it in motorsport at any point, I would still have been involved in the industry somehow.

"I was my own mechanic on my kart and I was mechanic on a lot of other race cars. I did a bit of low-level engineering, but it was all taking me in that direction. Once you get into motorsport, that is all you know and you are wrapped up in it."

Question: How important was the BRDC McLaren Autosport award?
Malcolm Munt

Via email

GP: "It was so important. Throughout my career there has been some really major staging points, and that was one of them certainly. Winning that award was one of the factors that decided whether I would make it or not and it was one of the biggest.

"That came off the back of winning the Formula Vauxhall Junior championship in 1999. It had been a tough year and I went into the final race in third place in the points, but I won at Silverstone in the last round and took the title.

"Coming off the back of a season like that, it still felt like I was relatively low-profile really. I wasn't a big name coming through: you have the big names who go with the big teams, but I wasn't one of them. They get all the investment and spotlight, and I was going along winning things and people didn't necessarily know who I was.

"That meant winning the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award was massive for me at that stage of my career. I was up against all these drivers that people might have regarded as bigger names – people like Ryan Dalziel, Richard Lyons and Craig Murray.

"Going into it, just getting nominated to be one of the six going for that award was a massive thing in itself. For everyone one around me like my family and [karting guru and Paffett's backer] Martin Hines, it was a real step up in recognition.

"I went and did the test and I thought it went really well. There was no expectation from anyone to go and win it, I just thought it was great to be there. I remember going to the

"Winning the award was such a massive deal for my future"

Gary Paffett

Photos: Motorsport Images



Making an impact in Formula Vauxhall Jr

Autosport Awards that evening, and in the car on the way there, Martin Hines asked me who I thought was going to win the Young Driver Award. I replied and I told him I thought I had a decent chance. No-one really gets to see that test, no-one knows who really performs on the day but just because of where the other drivers had come from, there was probably more expectation on them. But I was confident I had done the best job I could have done.

“When it got announced on the night, I think there was a level of surprise it was me. All of a sudden, there I was in the spotlight and it really did propel me on in terms of my career. It opened up relationships with McLaren especially but generally across the motorsport landscape too because suddenly people knew my name.”

Question: *Martin Hines had full belief in you – that must have been very important...*

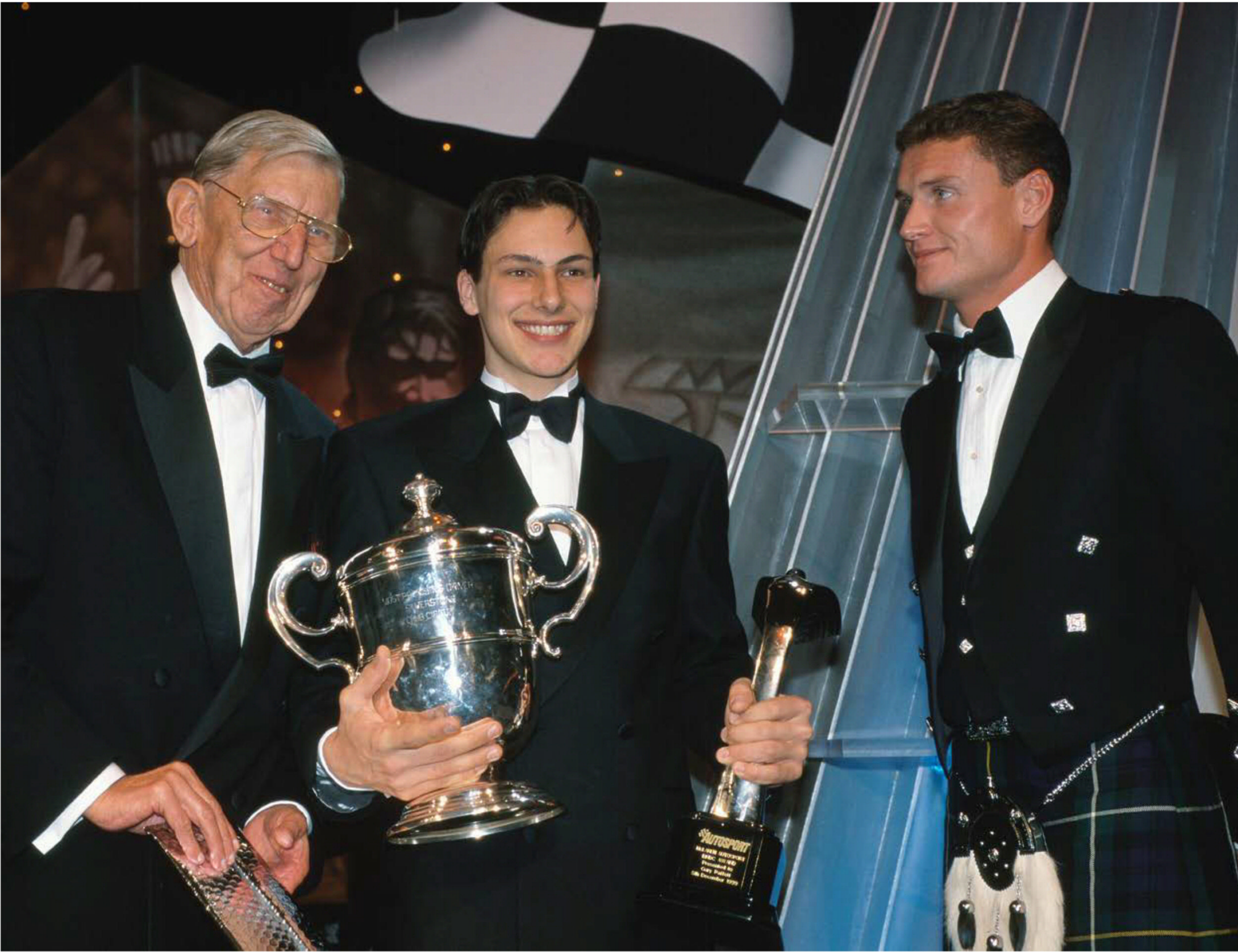
Steven Nye
Via email

GP: “He was clearly a big name in karting when I was coming through and he was running the biggest team in the UK at the time. His son Luke, although he was a year younger than me, he was coming through at the same time in similar championships to me.

“When I started out, it was just my dad and I pitching and suddenly I started doing quite well. We turned up in our van with the kart in the back and we finished sixth in the British championship in that first year in 1991 just on our own. We had no support from anyone.

“After that, people started helping us out with karts and engines. Simon Wright helped us out, and John Button helped us out with engines. In the end, Martin Hines came to us and said he had been watching me and I had showed some promise, and he asked if I would like to go and race for ZipKart. He supported me from that point onwards all the way through

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Turning point: a young Gary Paffett collected the McLaren Autosport BRDC young driver award from Ken Tyrrell and David Coulthard

FEATURE



Paffett joined Rosberg for German F3 and won title



Paffett in F3 and collecting his big cheque (above)



“We never had pots of cash as I came up through the ranks”

Gary Paffett

karting and into car racing. Clearly he wanted success for ZipKart and he also wanted someone there to be working with Luke and bringing him on too.

“It was perfect for both of us because I got into a top team with a top chassis and he had someone in the team showing what the karts could do.”

Question: What did you do with the £125,000 for winning the National Class of British F3 in 2000?

Gary Whiting
Via email
GP: “I didn’t really have a choice in that one. Although I got handed the nice, big rectangular cardboard cheque at the end of the season, it wasn’t for my back pocket! It was a fund towards the next season’s racing...”

“The National F3 title prize enabled me to step up to German F3 for 2001 [where Paffett finished sixth before going on to claim the outright title in 2002]. We were living on a year-by-year basis for my career, and without the £125,000, I wouldn’t have been able to progress.

“We had been doing everything on a really low budget. For 2000, we went to Fred Goddard to run us in National Class F3. We found an engineer and we

got an old car and we went to do it, but it was very hard to mouth. There was no way we would have been able to run in the main class. I think the season was probably completed for about £100,000, which was nothing even back then.

“Going to Germany for F3 was just another great opportunity. I was with Team Rosberg and it was just starting out. They wanted a good driver in the team and so I got a bit of a deal there. The money from winning the National Class was about half the budget for Rosberg.”

Question: What was the deal with Brand Motorsport for F3000 in 2003? You only did one race...

Ian Elsey
Via email
GP: “There were a lot of big promises, but nothing was ever delivered. And, I had turned down a DTM drive that season because I wanted to follow the single-seater path.

“This chance came along with Brand Motorsport and when we went to see them, they had all these drawings of the car with Coca Cola livery and Virgin branding. There were all these sorts of things in the offing. They did put a team together and over the winter



McLaren prize drive was start of a long association with the team

testing it was pretty good. Myself and my team-mate Nicolas Minassian were pretty quick.

“But then, before the first race, all the engineers left. They hadn’t been paid and so they walked away. We went to the first race at Imola with our number-one mechanic engineering the cars. Minassian walked away from the team after Imola and then a couple of days after that, it was all over and the team folded.

“All my plans fell apart at that stage. Because I had been racing in F3 in Germany I had been in front of the DTM teams and in front of Mercedes. They gave me a test at the end of 2002 in a DTM car which had gone really well. They’d offered me a drive for 2003 and I had turned it down.

“And then there was another of those sliding doors moments that seem to have defined my career – and without every one of them, my career wouldn’t have happened. Team Rosberg, who I had worked with in German F3, was in the DTM and they were running year-old Mercedes CLKs. A week or two before the first DTM race Uwe Alzen had a bust-up with Mercedes and left the team. Mercedes needed to replace him in one of the works cars and so they promoted Christijan Albers from Rosberg into a works car. They filled the Rosberg car temporarily with Patrick Huisman, and then a week later I got a call from Arno Zensen from Team Rosberg telling me he’d seen my news and he had a DTM car for me to race if I wanted to. Two days after losing my F3000 drive, all of a sudden I was a professional driver in the DTM!”

Questions: Could you tell straight away if a McLaren you were testing was going to be a good car?
Russell Scobbie
Via email
GP: “A lot of the times, you had an idea, yes. If there was a big regulation change,

it was hard. Between 2007 and going into 2008, you kind of knew it was a good car [the MP4/23]. We had been close in 2007 and when we put the 2008 car out there, I could tell straight away it was an improvement. We’d made stuff better and the car felt quicker.

“Going into 2009 was really tough. There was a big regulation change with much less downforce. KERS was added on to the cars and it was a completely different animal. We went testing but we just didn’t know of the car was any good or not. We had no idea where we were going to be in the pecking order.

“You come out with the numbers and you look at those and make sure it comes out on track like it does on the simulator. You know those quantities and they are fine, but compared to your competitors, you don’t really know where you are at.

“You can do all the mileage you want, but you never know until you run up against the others. You can tell if the balance is horrible and you know what you are going to be fighting with but in general it is hard to know until you get to testing.”

Question: In your opinion, why were you in so much demand as a test driver?
Damien Doherty
Via email
GP: “It all comes down to the feedback that you can give the engineers, and that extends to every part of the car. You have to be quick, but that last half a tenth of a second really doesn’t matter so much in testing.

“The important thing is to be able to do consistent laps and you need to feel the differences of all the changes they are making on the car and give accurate and honest feedback. I have seen so many drivers over the years testing different things and heard the feedback they are giving – some of them ramble on so much that you don’t actually know

what bits of information are useful or not. Some of them can’t feel the difference in much but are just quick at driving without really knowing why. That applies to some of the top drivers out there: they can’t feel the difference in car terms or how to make it better. They just drive it fast...”

MN: So how can they do that, but you can actually feel the nuances?

GP: “I don’t know really. It is just something I can do. I have driven with drivers before where they are driving so close to their limit and right on the edge of their comfort zone that they can’t process what is going on because they are just hanging on to the car.

“As a test driver, you have to drive to a level where it is quick enough to push the car to its limits, but also to a point where you can process all the information that’s going on and to be able to compare it to things you might have experienced before. When you are testing, you might be referring to things that you’ve tried weeks, months or even years ago. You are referring back to times when you’ve made certain changes and you need to remember what it did.

“Also, you really can’t bin the car too often...”

Question: How close were you to an F1 drive? Where there any other talks apart from McLaren?
Simon Crowther
Via email
GP: “I was very close and there were a couple of opportunities with McLaren. The first one was in 2006 when Juan Pablo Montoya left the team. That was actually my biggest disappointment that I didn’t get the chance to race the car that year.

“Myself and Pedro de la Rosa were both reserve drivers for the team and it was Pedro who jumped in and did the final eight rounds. I genuinely feel like I had done enough to warrant a shot at it

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Up-and-coming talents: Britton Paffett and Antonio Pizzonia in 2000

FEATURE



Paffett first scaled the DTM by winning the 2005 crown



British ace Gary Paffett is fourth equal on the all-time race winners list for the DTM category

and wanted a chance in at least some of those races but it didn't happen. That was the first and the biggest chance.

"For 2007, there was another chance as McLaren replaced both drivers [with Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton]. There was another shot there, but they'd brought in Fernando and that was a no-brainer. And at that point, Lewis was just ready for his chance. For me, it was just bad timing that Lewis was up to speed so quickly."

MN: Do you regret the fact that you were never a grand prix driver?

GP: "No. I don't believe in regrets, especially if you have done everything you can. My career has been about taking opportunities and I have been given chances that maybe other people wouldn't have got and I took them all.

"Personally, I don't feel there was much more I could have done. And I understand the way it works. Some people get the chance, and some don't. I am disappointed not to have raced in F1 but I certainly don't regret it.

"There were always talks. I had a discussion with BMW about a reserve and race seat in F1 too, and the other one that came close to happening, away from McLaren, was Prodrive [for 2009]. I was pretty certain to be racing that car, but the project just didn't come off."

Question: What was [McLaren boss] Ron Dennis like to work for?

Emma Facey
Via email

GP: "He is definitely an individual like no other. He is a perfectionist. When you met up with him, you never really knew what Ron Dennis you were going to get. Some days, he would come and chat to you for ages about stuff, and other days

he just wouldn't talk at all – he wouldn't say a word...

"But you have to look at what he did with the team. He was hugely successful but, for me, as a character he was quite unpredictable. There was no doubt that when he walked into the garage, everybody stood up straight and paid attention."

Question: Bernd Schneider, Jean Alesi, Mika Hakkinen and Ralf Schumacher? Who was the toughest team-mate and who taught you the most?

Ed Sleigh
Via email

GP: "I would say Bernd Schneider probably ticks both boxes there. He definitely taught me the most. He was incredible when I came into the team. He was helpful and had a massive knowledge of the DTM having won the title so many times.

"He was probably also the toughest competitor I have had out of all of them. If you look at the others like Alesi, Hakkinen and Ralf Schumacher, they all came to the DTM after a long period of F1. They did OK in DTM, but none of them was ever a championship contender – they might have had the odd race where they shone but that was it. They probably passed on a bit of knowledge about motorsport in general and things like that, but for things that actually helped me in DTM and with the cars, it was Bernd. He was the one who pushed me hardest on track too."

MN: In a recent MN interview, your fellow racer Peter Dumbreck said that the DTM chooses who wins it not the other way around... it is a hard championship to conquer..



Paffett and HWA team both struggled on Formula E debut

GP: “There are lots of different aspects to it. One side to it is you just driving the car and having a rhythm where you get the confidence. Having the car in the right window is crucial. Once you get into that groove, it stays with you. I had that in 2004 and 2005, the car was just there for me, it felt good and it was relatively easy.

“In my last season in it in 2018, it was a similar thing. Every time I jumped in the car, it felt strong. I was always quick in qualifying, it just worked for me. So that is one side to it.

“The other side is within the teams. It has changed now with the new regulations, but with the DTM as it was up until 2018, we had a team of between six or eight other Mercedes cars out there that can either help or hinder you. If you have got five team-mates that are trying to help you – which happened all the time – it makes things a lot easier.

“I had that in 2005 when I had a good start to the season [he won three of the opening six races and Paffett went on to take the title]. If you do that, the focus then switches to you and suddenly

life becomes a lot easier.

“That didn’t happen so much in 2018 when I was fighting against the sister car of Paul di Resta, so the team was really split with who they were going to support.”

MN: So it is quite political then?

GP: “Yes, but all of motorsport is, isn’t it?”

Question: What was the hardest thing about Formula E when you tackled the 2018-2019 season for HWA?

John Thompson

Via email

GP: “It was the team’s first year and it was what has now gone on to become the official Mercedes-Benz Formula E team. We did it on a tight budget.”

MN: It didn’t go brilliantly well...

[Paffett’s best result was two eighth places and he was 19th in the points]

GP: “You’ve put that very kindly: it was a horrible year! The idea around that was to build the Mercedes team. We were a customer of Venturi [for the powertrain], which wasn’t great and we had a lot of reliability issues especially

with the driveshafts: we had a lot of failures.

“A lot of the systems – things like the braking – were not very nice. I didn’t have the Formula E experience and I was up against [team-mate] Stoffel Vandoorne. He had a lot of reliability issues too, but he was fresh from Formula 1. It was a tough season.

“Most of the personnel from my title-winning season in DTM got on the same plane as me at the end of that campaign and we all went down to Spain to start testing for a Formula E campaign. None of us had the experience, really. There were new people, it was a new car for me and it was a new championship.

“It wasn’t like stepping into Abt, for example, which has been in the category since the get-go. We all started from zero so we were expected to struggle.”

Question: Are you enjoying your role on the pitwall?

James Hilton

Via email

MN: Also, it must be exciting to be involved in an all-electric



The first season in the DTM happened after his F3000 deal fell through



The first race wins for Mercedes came during the 2004 campaign

championship. It is the future for motorsport...

GP: “Electric motorsport is a fresh challenge for everyone, and it is so different when you drive the car and the way you prepare the cars is all new. The strategy and the race management is a new way of thinking. It adds a fresh level of interest to motorsport and that is only going to get more and more interesting as technologies develop. We see so many more electric cars on the road now too – the change is coming. Electric motorsport is becoming much more relevant to road-car users because they are learning about power regeneration and all of those things. They can relate to the formulas more and more.

“My role in the team now is very exciting [Paffett is the Mercedes-Benz Formula E team’s sporting and technical advisor]. I kind of fell into it after not getting the race seat for season six when Nyck de Vries came along.

“They wanted to keep hold of me after my experience with the team. For the first season I was a sporting advisor. I would consult on any sporting matters so I would do a lot of work with the drivers seeing how we could get the most out of them and the way they worked with the engineers and I did a lot of work with the strategy side of things too.

“This year, I have added the team manager role to that. I am a lot busier and I do a lot more management of the personnel, more of the administrative jobs around the car, I liaise with the FIA and the stewards, things like that. My job has expanded quite a lot.”

Question: Is there a category of racing you’ve not done that you want to... why don’t we see you at Goodwood, for example?

Barry May

Via email

GP: “I have Goodwood on my radar. I will certainly be there at some point, without a doubt. It is something I would love to do and I watch it all the time. I absolutely love the look of it. It looks so much fun. This sounds like a come-and-get-me plea, doesn’t it?”

“The one category that I had a taste of that I loved was endurance racing. I did some GT3 racing for a couple of years. It is very different from the sprint racing I have done before and it is very interesting and so the one thing I would really love to have ticked off is Le Mans. That’s definitely something I feel I have missed out on. I loved doing the Spa 24 Hours in a GT3 car and that’s pretty close, but Le Mans is special.”

Question: What advice would you give to a young driver?

Mike Hills

Via email

GP: “My advice to any young driver would be to just have confidence in yourself. Just believe that you can do anything that someone else can do.

“Throughout my career – especially when you get into racing cars – you turn up to a track and you go out and you are not as quick as someone else. The first thing I would do would be to delve into the data, find out where they are quicker and then just do what they were doing. There should be no reason why I or anyone couldn’t go that quickly too.

“That was the confidence I had, and that should be the same for any driver.” ■

“You can have up to five team-mates helping”

Gary Paffett



Paffett’s second DTM title win came with Mercedes in the 2018 battle

FEATURE

TEAM USA SCHOLARSHIP: RISING STARS AND STRIPES

It's helped the likes of Josef Newgarden on their way with a chance in the UK, and it's still going strong. Graham Keilloh finds out more



Conor Daly resplendent in Team USA colours in 2008

If you were among those watching last year's two end-of-season Formula Ford events, you cannot have failed to notice the two Team USA Scholarship cars. And not only because of their resplendent stars-and-stripes liveries.

Max Esterson from its number won Silverstone's Walter Hayes Trophy having been the one to beat all weekend. And a week earlier he similarly set the pace in Brands Hatch's Formula Ford Festival, though his victory chance was dashed by a wet semi-final struggle, not helped by his tyre choice.

Still, in the Festival final Esterson rose thrillingly from starting 13th to finish second, just 0.138 seconds off what would have been a double win. And his fellow Team USA runner Andre Castro completed the podium in third.

Team USA Scholarship offers a funded drive in those two blue-riband FF1600 events to two selected up-and-coming American drivers. It's been going since 1990, and its alumni includes plenty of prestigious names (see sidebar), including Stateside stars Josef Newgarden, Jimmy Vasser and Conor Daly.

It was founded by journalist Jeremy Shaw, who covered UK open-wheeled junior racing for Motoring News and Autosport before relocating to America in 1985. And the programme started, somewhat, by chance.

"In 1990 Formula Ford appeared like it was on its last legs because they were cancelling British Formula Ford championship races due to lack of entries," Shaw tells Motorsport News. "So I thought if this is going to be the last-ever Formula Ford Festival, I want to be there."

"And then I started thinking if there's not going to be that many entries maybe we can put together a last-minute deal and bring over a young American and if there's not that many cars maybe he can do fairly well."

"So I had a word with a few of my friends around the IndyCar paddock and got a lot of enthusiasm and three or four people said they'd chip in some money."

"I had a word with a few friends in the UK and organised a car, organised budget, came up with a shortlist of drivers and off we went – to be greeted by one of the largest entries they've ever had, because everybody had the same idea, and 30 years later the Festival is still going strong. It was a real last-minute programme, it was put together literally without any major thought, but it was successful."

Moreover it was successful even though the promising American picked – none other than 1996 CART champion Vasser – was taken out on lap one of his heat.

"He [still] met a lot of people and it was just a great experience," Shaw continues, "and those contacts he was able to make were useful for years down the road. We took him to Reynard and Lola and perhaps Cosworth."

And thus Team USA Scholarship as an annual entity, and one subsequently benefiting from a bit more planning, was born.

"We've helped out a lot of guys over the years and all of them I'd say without exception appreciated what the programme did for them," Shaw adds. "It gives an opportunity to race overseas for the first time but more important probably is the opportunity to meet all sorts of people that can help them in their future career."

Yet that of course is not to

underestimate what the scholarship's on-track experience does for its drivers too. And Daly is a good person to explain, as when he represented the programme in 2008 he won the Walter Hayes Trophy, ensuring a unique scholarship clean sweep as his teammate, future twice IndyCar champion Newgarden, won that year's Festival.

"[Formula Ford] was something that I knew was a good stepping stone to start learning about how to drive a race car fast," Daly tells MN, "so I knew the Festival was massive."

"The Festival was really cool because there are so many cars, but also Brands Hatch the Indy circuit is very unique, and that was a cool experience to learn. And it still actually frustrates me to this day how that race weekend went for us: we had a stuck throttle in one of our heat races which put us so far down for the final. Honestly I think we could have won both."

"[The Walter Hayes] was awesome because I love inclement weather and the weather was terrible. But it was an awesome feeling [to win], it was a race that went exactly how we wanted it to go. We did our job, didn't make mistakes and had some great battles with a lot of really talented drivers over

there and we were able to win which was still a really really satisfying victory."

Shaw adds: "Formula Ford, it's still a great training ground and it's affordable by most standards. Most open-wheeled series now the costs have got in my opinion out of hand, but that's not the case with Formula Ford, and so raising the money to do that has been doable without having to spend a massive amount of time and effort in finding extra sponsorships."

"Value for money has been my big thing. That's my hot button if you like and remains so to this day."

And one word keeps coming up when seeking to capture what the events, and the scholarship, offer to drivers.

"It gave us some credibility, I think credibility is the main thing," Daly says. "You ask anyone across the Formula 1 paddock, certainly if they're from the UK, you know about the Formula Ford Festival, you know the history of it and if you look at any old racing documentaries about anyone who became successful in Formula 1 they probably went to the Formula Ford Festival."

"[The scholarship] gave me a lot of confidence, because that was my first trip overseas and I hadn't [before] really got to see what the European scene had to offer. I certainly think it put our skills on display."

"So it was a great first step to probably my first Formula 1 contract that I signed. I signed that with Force India in 2012 and [its then deputy team principal] Bob Fernley I think was at the Festival and the Walter Hayes when I was there. So it definitely led to a lot."

The holistic benefits from the scholarship are also reflected in how it selects its drivers. Six shortlisted

candidates gather for a shootout to identify the fortunate duo, and it's not entirely about what you do on track.

"They've got to be able to shine in and out of the car," Shaw explains. "If you don't have the money yourself you've got to have the personality or the drive or the focus or whatever it is to give yourself an opportunity that you might be able to raise the sponsorship."

"And with this programme it certainly gives you some credibility and some recognition and if you've got the personality to take advantage of that then you could be off and running and quite a few guys have done exactly that which is really satisfying."

"I'm not interested in helping the multi-millionaires that don't need the help. I'm looking to give the people an opportunity who otherwise wouldn't have it."

Daly, for one, is appreciative. "We were definitely told at a young age 'hey, you better start being relational and you better talk to these people and you better make sure that they want to support you'," he recalls. "We had to write letters, do video training and stuff like that and make sure that you reached out to the sponsors of the programme. As a young kid it's hard to call all these guys that have been around racing a long time, who have been sponsors of motorsport. It was cool to get to talk to them early on."

"There are a lot of people who I have communicated with or who I still communicate with that supported the Team USA Scholarship."

Esterson, the most recent alumnus, concurs. "It's a great place to meet a lot of important people in the sport," he tells MN. "All the judges were there to help besides judging so it was a good opportunity to learn from them, super-

"All of them appreciate what we did"

Jeremy Shaw

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images



Newgarden (left) and Daly (second from left) made '08 a special year



The latest to graduate: Esterson dominated 2021's Walter Hayes

experienced people from Josef Newgarden, Andy Lally who's a very accomplished sportscar driver and lots of others. They gave us pointers on track with our driving and also how to manage relationships off track in terms of sponsorship and all that.

"[Newgarden is] very cool, very nice guy, very down to earth, you can tell he's just a racer so it's very easy to connect with him."

And for Shaw this part is totemic. "What's perhaps most satisfying for me is that many of the drivers after they've been selected and then gone on to become proper professional drivers they chip back into the programme, they put some money back into it and/or time," he notes.

"And that is revealing because it just shows how the character is important, integrity and all those values that seem to be ebbing away in modern-day life are important and the fact that the drivers who have been involved in the past continue to want to help in any way that they can is super satisfying. And the fact that the vast majority have gone on to have some success is icing on the cake."

Daly concludes: "Any time as a young driver you can get an opportunity where you get to do any racing that's funded and you can go over there and all you have to worry about is just your own personal performance, that's really special."

"And I still keep up with it today, still try to help out Jeremy Shaw whenever he needs any type of evaluation. At Mid-Ohio every year usually he brings his Team USA Scholarship contestants to the race track and we usually stop by and talk to them and it's really cool to meet these young kids and I've seen a lot of them become successful." ■



The scholarship's year one was '90 with Jimmy Vasser



Conor Daly is greeted by dad Derek after his Walter Hayes triumph



Team USA Scholarship has several notable alumni and many of them chip back into the programme



A final six get to fight it out for a scholarship slot, and it's about what you do off track as well as on it

TEAM USA SCHOLARSHIP ROLL OF HONOUR

YEAR	DRIVER
Formula Ford Festival	
1990	Jimmy Vasser
1991	Bryan Herta
1992	Ashton Lewis; Tony Ave
1993	Jerry Nadeau
1994	Mike Borkowski; Clay Collier
International Formula 3	
1995	Memo Gidley
Formula Vauxhall Nations Cup	
1996	Jerry Nadeau; Tony Renna
1997	Matt Sielsky; Buddy Rice
1998	Paul Edwards
Formula Palmer Audi Winter Series	
1999	Paul Edwards*; Andy Lally; Jeff Simmons
2000	Phil Giebler*; Joey Hand
New Zealand Formula Ford	
2001	AJ Allmendinger; Bryan Sellers
2003	Joe D'Agostino; Charlie Kimball; Ryan Millen
2004	Slade Miller
Formula Palmer Audi Autumn Trophy	
2005	JR Hildebrand
2006	Robert Podlesni; Dane Cameron*
2007	Joel Miller; Patrick Barrett
Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy	
2008	Josef Newgarden*; Conor Daly***
2009	Brett Smrz; Connor De Phillippi***
2010	Felix Serralles; Spencer Pigot
2011	Spencer Pigot; Trent Hindman; Neil Alberico
2012	Tristan Nunez***; Jack Mitchell Jr; Matthew Brabham
2013	Neil Alberico; Jake Eidson; Joey Bickers
2014	Aaron Telitz; Michai Stephens
2015	Michai Stephens; Dakota Dickerson
2016	Oliver Askew; Kyle Kirkwood; Neil Verhagen
2017	Aaron Jeanonne; Jonathan Kobyk
2018	Jake Craig; Colin Mullan
2019	Josh Green; Scott Huffaker
2020	Bryce Aron; Jackson Lee; Simon Sikes
2021	Max Esterson***; Andre Castro
*Won Formula Palmer Audi Winter Series/Autumn Trophy	
**Won Formula Ford Festival (Kent)	
***Won Walter Hayes Trophy	

To New Zealand and back...

Team USA Scholarship, as in its 1990 debut year, offers its drivers a place in the Formula Ford Festival, and these days also in its sister Walter Hayes Trophy. But the scholarship's itinerary between times has roamed.

"We did [the Festival] up until '94," founder Jeremy Shaw tells Motorsport News, "but they were messing around with Formula Ford in terms of what engine it was going to have. In '94 we tried to run in a Zetec but there just weren't enough competitive cars and engines around so our cars really struggled."

"Then in '95 when we took in Memo Gidley, I'd known Dick Bennetts from Formula 3 days way way back and he had a car available for a non-championship race at Donington. [That] was great, but it was still fairly expensive plus for most of the drivers a Formula 3 car then was two or three steps up the ladder."

"So for the following year we came down a notch and ran two cars in the Nations Cup, which is Formula Vauxhall Lotus, which again was more cost effective, had tremendous visibility, exposure, it was really really good."

"When that went away we switched across to Formula Palmer Audi and again cost effective wise it was brilliant. Again it's a bit too much car for what our guys were probably ready for but it was a great experience, our guys shone in it."

"I [then] thought let's get back to Formula Ford, and in New Zealand it was super strong. I was able to keep two drivers down there for two months. It was just fantastic value for money, and the exchange rate to New Zealand from the US was really good."

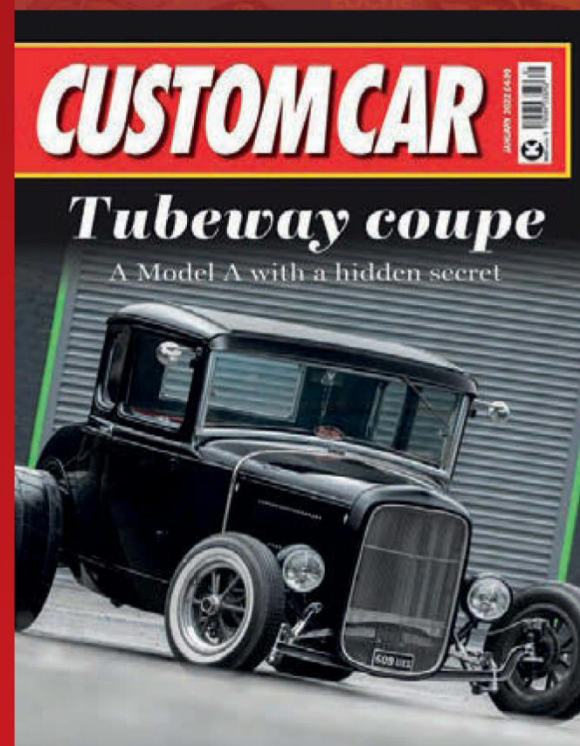
The scholarship for 2005 returned to the UK, initially again with Formula Palmer Audi then from '08 it reverted to the Festival with now the Walter Hayes added.

"[Formula Ford] was more focused in the UK [than before] and the other engines all went away," Shaw notes, "the exchange rate for New Zealand was worsening and by then it was more cost effective to go back to the UK."

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RALLY REPORTS

GALWAY RALLY: ITRC BY MARTIN WALSH

FEBRUARY 5-6

MOFFETT TOPS EVANS ON IRISH TAR

Hyundai man had to battle his rivals and the tricky conditions to claim the Galway International win

Photos: MartinWalsh

The return of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship on the Galway International Rally served up an enthralling encounter as Monaghan’s Josh Moffett (Hyundai i20 R5) finished 14.1 seconds ahead of Welsh ace Meirion Evans (Volkswagen Polo GTi R5) after a gruelling two days that encompassed 15 stages close to Loughrea.

Rain, wind and copious amounts of standing water provided a somewhat traditional Galway opening to the series. Evans had the honour of setting the fastest stage time of the new season finishing the Kiltormer test with a 2.2s advantage over Moffett.

Indeed, that was the pattern of the day as they battled for supremacy through the west of Ireland lanes. After the opening loop, Moffett was a mere tenth of a second ahead with Evans suffering wiper troubles on the shortened third stage.

It was relatively minor in comparison to Callum Devine whose Fiesta Rally 2 suffered understeer. Alastair Fisher (VW Polo) slotted into fourth and was a little self-critical of his performance. Cathan McCourt (Fiesta) and VW Polo debutant Daniel Cronin followed. The conditions caught out Donagh



Moffatt splashed to a victory



Evans' challenge came unstuck against a brick wall

Kelly, whose VW Polo GTi’s left-front wing was ripped off.

On the middle loop, Moffett endured a trip into a drain and Evans slid into a ditch leaving the margin between them at 10.2s.

Overnight, an untroubled Moffett held a 14.1s lead over Evans. Having softened the suspension, Devine was quickest through stages seven and nine to close to within 17.5s of the lead. Fisher regained

fourth; McCourt spun twice on the final stages and Cronin ended the day sixth as he acclimatised to his new mount.

On Sunday’s second stage Fisher dropped out of contention when his car sustained two front punctures and had a brief off-road excursion.

Moffett had several instances of aquaplaning and issues related to the power steering that malfunctioned after going

through flooded sections as Evans cut the deficit to 5.1s by stage 11. Moffett went 10s ahead on stage 12 but Evans was quick once again on Black Road to reduce the margin to 6.8s; Devine admitted he couldn’t find any more speed.

Moving 17.6s clear on the penultimate stage Moffett went on to take victory, coincidentally by 14.1s, the same as his overnight

advantage. Evans endured final-stage drama when he hit a wall that took a chunk of alloy from the front-left wheel rim.

Devine and McCourt, who punctured twice during the day were next followed by Cronin and Fisher.

Results
Organiser: Galway Motor Club
When: February 5-6 **Where:** Galway, Co. Galway **Stages:** 15
Starters: 125 + 12 Juniors
Championships: Irish Tarmac Championship.

1 Josh Moffett/Andy Hayes (Hyundai i20 R5) 1h46m40.8s; 2 Meirion Evans/Jonathan Jackson (VW Polo GTi R5) +14.1s; 3 Callum Devine/Brian Hoy (Ford Fiesta Rally2) +28.7s; 4 Cathan McCourt/Liam Moynihan (Ford Fiesta Rally2) +3m08s; 5 Daniel Cronin/Shane Buckley (VW Polo GTi R5) +3m48.4s; 6 Alastair Fisher/Gordon Noble (VW Polo GTi R5) +4m40.5s; 7 David Kelly/Dean O’Sullivan (Ford Fiesta R5) +5m07.5s; 8 Enda O’Brien/John Butler (VW Polo GTi R5) +6m05.9s; 9 Paul Barrett/Darragh Kelly (Ford Fiesta R5) +7m03.2s; 10 Keith Lyons/JJ Cremin (Ford Fiesta R5) +7m07.9s.

RIPONIAN RALLY: RMSC BY PETER SCHERER

FEBRUARY 6

MELLORS PUTS RIPONIAN JINX TO BED

Proton Iriz driver dominates the modern section of a challenging Yorkshire-based event

Photos: Ben Lawrence

Ollie Mellors and Max Freeman were never headed as their Proton Iriz R5 took a 31-second victory on the modern section of the Riponian Rally

The winner was relieved. “I’ve led this rally three times, crashed out of the lead and been second twice, so it was about time I won it,” said Mellors.

Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson’s Ford Fiesta led the chase initially, pulling out a four-second gap over Thomas Preston/Carl Williamson’s Fiesta R5 after the opening runs through Wass and Cropton.

Petch retired however in Gale Rigg with cam sensor problem, but Preston also lost out to Elliott Payne/Patrick Walsh’s Fiesta R5, which meant he was usurped for second place.

A stage later Preston was out too. He made it to the end of the Wass stage, but with extensive damage he went no further, which moved David Henderson/Chris Lees’ Ford Fiesta R5 into fourth.

Alan Carmichael/Arthur

Kierans’ Hyundai R5 had started well, but vacated fourth with a stage-two retirement, while Kevin Procter/Josh Beer were out after crashing their Ford Fiesta S200T heavily on the opener.

Payne was quickest on the second Wass stage, but the gap was still 29s to Mellors, while up to fourth were Charlie Payne/Jamie Edwards. “It was out first event in a new car and didn’t have the right suspension settings on the first loop,” said Payne Sr.

Just to add spice to the event, the morning sunshine had given way to sleet, snow and strong winds. Mellors was quickest again through Cropton but, despite outpacing the leader on the final stage, Payne had to settle for second. “We had the wrong tyres in the morning, but then pushed hard in the afternoon, and topped the times on stages,” said Payne.

But it was Mellors in command. “Apart from hitting a gatepost on stage one we had a good day, sensible and got to the finish and the

car was fantastic,” he said.

Henderson completed the overall podium. He said: “We had all four seasons in one day, but I just wanted to get a finish with the car,” he explained.

Charlie Payne held onto fourth, from Hugh Brunton/Charley Sayer-Payne’s Fiesta R5. “I had quite a few dramas and on stage five grabbed the handbrake and a hairpin and reversed into a bank,” Brunton admitted.

Scott Renshaw/Tom Spencer’s Subaru Impreza rounded off the top six after retaking the place from Gary Cooper/Jon Riley’s Impreza.

Ben Cree/Chris Row’s Vauxhall Corsa led Class B all day, taking the win by well over three minutes from Chris/James Greenall’s Nova. After Nick Cook/Dave Raw’s Escort retired on stage three, Paul Thompson/Josh Davison’s Escort won Class C from Ken Sturdy/Chris Sharpe-Simkiss’ similar car. In Class D Ross Brusby/Hannah McKillop’s Escort led throughout and were eighth overall too.



Even an altercation with a gatepost could not derail the flying Ollie Mellors

Results
Organiser: Ripon MSC **When:** February 6 **Where:** North Yorkshire
Championships: Crew 25, SG Petch ANECCC, ANCC, ANWCC Forest
Starters: 57 **Stages:** 6
1 Ollie Mellors/Max Freeman (Proton Iriz R5) 43m41s; 2 Elliot Payne/Patrick

Walsh (Ford Fiesta R5) +31s; 3 David Henderson/Chris Lees (Ford Fiesta R5); 4 Charlie Payne/Jamie Edwards (Ford Fiesta Rally2) 5 Hugh Brunton/Charley Sayer-Payne (Ford Fiesta R5); 6 Scott Renshaw/Tom Spencer (Subaru Impreza); 7 Gary Cooper/Jon Riley (Subaru Impreza); 8 Ross Brusby/

Hannah McKillop (Ford Escort Mk2); 9 John Rintoul/Ross Hynd (Ford Fiesta R5); 10 Paul Thompson/Josh Davison (Ford Escort Mk2).
Class winners: Ben Cree/Chris Row (Opel Corsa); Thompson/Davison; Brusby/McKillop; Mellors/Freeman.

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RALLY REPORTS

RIPONIAN RALLY: BHRC BY PAUL LAWRENCE

FEBRUARY 6

HOME RULE DOMINATES IN YORKSHIRE

Robinson and Collis are the first to strike in the chase for British Historic Rally Championship

Photos: Ben Lawrence



Robinson was able to measure his pace late on



Ben Friend was in the hunt until a puncture slowed him

PROVISIONAL RESULTS

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis	Ford Escort Mk2	46m53s
2	Nick Elliott/Dave Price	Ford Escort Mk2	+47s
3	Roger Chilman/Gwynfor Jones	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m24s
4	Henri Grehan/Dan Petrie	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m51s
5	Ben Friend/Cliff Simmons	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m57s
6	Robert Gough/Jack Bowen	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m02s
7	Simon Webster/Alun Cook	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m07s
8	Owen McMackin/Dai Roberts	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m26s
9	David Brown/Callum Atkinson	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m30s
10	Rudi Lancaster/Guy Weaver	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m45s

Class winners (Interclub): H1: Daniel Mennell/Steven Brown (Ford Escort Mk2); H2: Richard Spink/Nigel Hutchinson (Ford Escort Mk2). **Class winners (National):** B4: Bob Bean/Mike Curry (Ford Lotus Cortina); C1/C2: Mark Tugwell/Steve Pugh (Ford Escort Mk1); C3: Ben Smith/Steven Smith (Ford Escort Mk1); C4/C5: Jeremy Easson/Mike Reynolds (Datsun 240Z); D3: Ben Mellors/Alex Lee (Toyota Celica RA40); G2: Lancaster/Weaver.



Nick Elliott secured a second-placed finish

Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis drew first blood on the opening round of the British Historic Rally Championship with an emphatic victory in the Yorkshire forests on Sunday’s Riponian Rally.

In the wake of the flying Yorkshiremen, Nick Elliott and Dave Price headed the challenge but ended the day 47s adrift after rather sensibly calling off the chase on the opening stage of the afternoon leg. Roger Chilman and Henri Grehan rounded out the top four overall once a late puncture dropped defending champion Ben Friend from third.

Challenging stages and even more challenging weather conditions gave everyone a tough day out as the Riponian made its BHRC debut. Though there was no ice, strong winds blew in sleet, hail and snow blizzards through the afternoon, leaving the stages very challenging and very slippery.

Robinson, however, could not have wished for better as he put an early championship marker down. “There was some serious slipping going on out there,” he said with his customary grin. “I think it was probably one of our better performances, to be honest. To come back after the Roger Albert Clark, when we were

useless in the dark and struggled to get into a rhythm and give the boys a bit of a rush round, I’m pretty pleased with that.”

The Yorkshire forests provided the perfect backdrop for the BHRC season opener and the familiar Cropton and Gale Rigg stages joined the Wass stage to make up the competitive miles. Imaginative use of two sections of closed road allowed the short Wass, College Moor and Pry Rigg stages to be joined together while a new look was taken at Gale Rigg by adding a further short burst of asphalt mid-stage.

The season kicked off with the opening run through Wass where a 5.5-mile stage highlighted who was awake and who was still remembering what to do. Clearly, Weetabix had been on the Robinson menu on Sunday morning as he emerged at the end of Wass with a slim two-second lead over Elliott and then just built it through the day, barely putting a wheel wrong and winning every stage as they dropped the pack at a rate of around a second a mile.

Elliott and Price sat 22s adrift at the main service halt after the first loop of stages, but the second run of Wass prompted Elliott to make a decision. “Not far into stage four we went by Meirion Evans

who was off and decided to back off and make sure of second,” said Elliott on his birthday. “It was a tough day in those weather conditions.”

Yet Elliott could not afford to drop his pace too much as Friend and Cliff Simmons were only 14s behind in third at service. Friend attacked in Wass, but two half spins cost precious seconds. They settled for a steady run on the second run of Cropton and the gap grew to 27s but then disaster struck Friend in the final stage in Gale Rigg when, driving neatly for a podium, he picked up a puncture and lost around half a minute driving out the last four miles. “What a fast and furious day,” said Simmons.

Chilman/Gwynfor Jones and Grehan/Dan Petrie were two crews seeking a finish more than anything and both headed home to the Welsh borders with their mission accomplished. Chilman was in one of Meirion Evans’ cars while his own car is completed after its first-stage roll on the Roger Albert Clark Rally, while Grehan and his crew had worked wonders to convert his formerly open category Escort Mk2 into full historic trim in fairly short order.

Chilman just had the upper-hand and headed Grehan by 27s at the

end of the day as they both moved up a place on the final stage at the expense of Friend. “We hit a bale in a chicane pretty hard this afternoon, but I was surprised how little damage there was,” said Grehan.

Making it two Ludlow crews in the top six were Robert Gough and Jack Bowen, though Gough had struggled all weekend with a sickness bug, while next up was 2019 BHRC champion Simon Webster with Alun Cook on the notes. They got properly into the groove on the second loop after a cambelt issue was rectified at service.

Aside from Meirion Evans/Iwan Jones, who slid off on SS4, those who deserved more form their day included Adrian Hetherington and Ronan O’Neill, who set early top four times before puncturing in Gale Rigg and retiring in Wass.

Young Irishman Peter Bennett, with Simon Jones on the notes, showed his raw speed with two top-six times on his first proper run in the ex-Lee Ashberry Escort Mk2, while Alan Walker and John Conner were second only to Robinson in Wass 2 after changing an ailing gearbox at service. Unfortunately, they slid off in the final stage, albeit without damage, and took a stage maximum.

Bean struggles for vision as he lifts Category 1

In the categories, Bob Bean, and Mike Curry had Category 1 to themselves, but still had to work hard to bring the Lotus Cortina to the finish, as Bean approaches his 84th birthday. “Right from the start, the wipers packed in,” said Bean of one of the challenges.

Category two was the most open and a fine performance

from young Ben Smith, co-driven by his father and BHRC champion Steven, earned category victory in their Pinto-powered Escort MK1. “Absolutely brilliant,” said Ben. “Wass is now a favourite stage!”

Up against them went Jeremy Easson and Mike Reynolds in the mighty Datsun

240Z and Warren Philliskirk/Garry Green (Escort Mk1), but the loss of reverse gear for the second loop of stages forced Philliskirk to ease his pace and avoid the risk of spins and overshoots in order to get a decent finish.

Away from the BHRC contenders, who were running in the national level event,

some historics contested the Interclub rally where Daniel Mennell made his father’s 1600cc Escort Mk2 really fly.

Despite some confusion over the correct class for the car, Ben Mellors wowed the fans in his stunning Toyota Celica RA40 and has pledged to bring the rare car out more often this season.



Which way are we going? Bob Bean had his troubles...

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FIA says it could install a new grand prix race chief in time for 2022 opener in March

MASI TIPPED TO LOSE ROLE AS FORMULA 1 RACE DIRECTOR



By Matt James

Bosses of grand prix racing have hinted that Michael Masi's reign as Formula 1 race director could be over after the controversy surrounding the final race of the year in Abu Dhabi last December. The governing body has launched a review into the dying moments of the 2021 campaign when two rules regarding the deployment of the safety car and the restart of the race were not followed correctly. The upshot was that Red Bull's Max Verstappen was able to overtake Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton on the last lap to claim his first World Championship. The FIA's new head of F1 Peter Bayer said: "Michael did a superb job in many ways. We have told him that. But also, there is the possibility there could be a new race director." The FIA is due to report to teams next week on changes to the safety car regulations to make sure this type of incident does not happen again. Hamilton has threatened to walk away from grand prix racing if the situation remains unchanged. Full report page 4

Masi: removed?



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FEATURE

MOTORSPORT NEWS POLL: SCOTLAND'S FAVOURITE MOTORSPORT HERO

Motorsport News is on the hunt to crown the nation's most loved hero. By Matt James

Photos: Motorsport Images, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

There must be something about the highland air, but for a country of just over five million people, Scotland certainly has made its mark in the motorsport world.

Five F1 World championships have gone to drivers from north of the border and it has also spawned a three-time Indy 500 winner and perhaps the most famous World Rally Championship driver of all time.

It is an impressive record, and we are on a mission to uncover the most beloved driver who has sported the Saltire on their quest for motorsport success. Have your say on our website, details right.

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- Visit fastcar.co.uk
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THE CONTENDERS

1 Jim Clark

The two-time World champion was the driver his peers held in the highest regard. The quiet and sometimes socially awkward farmer from the Borders was not one for the headlines and the trappings of being a front-line racer. All he wanted to do was drive cars.



2 John Cleland

John Cleland himself would joke that he was a car salesman from Galashiels up against a host of international superstar racing drivers when the British Touring Car Championship was at its pomp in the mid-1990s, but he had the last laugh by trumping them all for the title in 1995 to add to his 1989 crown.



4 David Leslie

A rising single-seater star of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Dumfries and Galloway driver's star truly shone when he linked up with Ecurie Ecosse to tackle the World Endurance Championship in the C2 division. Leslie helped the squad to the teams' title in 1986. But it is perhaps as a BTCC driver that Leslie is best known.



5 Allan McNish

Dumfriesshire racer McNish was a bright young rising single-seater prospect until he got stuck at Formula 3000 level. Undeterred, he forged a career in sportscar racing. He took a win at Le Mans for Porsche and also raced for Toyota, for who he raced in Formula 1 in 2002, but is probably most associated with Audi, with which he took two further wins at Le Mans.



3 Dario Franchitti

How Formula 1 team bosses never woke up to the talents of Dario Franchitti is a crime but it didn't bother the West Lothian man. Instead, he set his sights on dominating America and boy, did he. The four-time single-seater title winner in the US is probably more famous for winning the Indy 500. Not only did he do it in 2007, he added his name to the Borg Warner Trophy again in 2010 and 2012.



6 Jimmy McRae

In the 1980s, Jimmy McRae was the benchmark driver in the British Rally Championship and took a record-breaking five titles between 1981 and 1988 and also claimed the Irish Tarmac spoils in the same decade. He also climbed to the highest stage on the global scene and was a Vauxhall, Opel and Austin Rover driver in his 25 appearances.

7 Colin McRae

The legacy of Colin McRae is unmatched in rallying, certainly in the UK. The Lanarkshire flier captures hearts and wins with his press-on style and sharp-tongued style with the media. Two British titles in 1991 and 1992 were the springboard into the WRC and that is where he felt truly at home. There were 25 wins from his 146 starts and he famously claimed the World championship in 1995.



8 Gordon Shedden

After graduating from racing at his local Knockhill circuit in Fife, Shedden headed south to measure himself against the best in one-make racing in England. After a spell in Ford Fiestas – where he was a title winner in 2000 – and Seat Cupras, Shedden stepped into a front-line seat in the BTCC with Team Dynamics in 2006. He was a winner in his maiden season. As a factory Honda driver, Shedden claimed the crown in 2012, 2015 and 2016 in the Civic Type R.



9 Archie Scott Brown

Although his star shone briefly, Archie Scott Brown's career is a real Boy's Own story. Born with withered legs and without a right hand, he had to overcome many obstacles. Sportscar builder Brian Lister was impressed by the Paisley driver's pace and the pair formed a formidable combination. Scott Brown's most significant win came in the British Empire Trophy at Oulton Park in 1957 but sadly he was killed in a sportscar race at Spa in Belgium less than a year later.

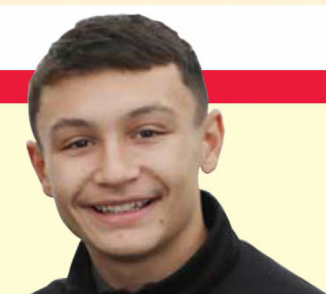


10 Jackie Stewart

Hailing from Dumbartonshire, Stewart's record of 27 grands prix victories from his 99 starts is a record to be proud of in an era where the poor reliability of the cars and the inherent dangers of the sport were highly prevalent. Three world championships – in 1969, 1971 and 1973 – were Stewart's reward for his silky smooth skills behind the wheel. It was a long way from his first racing steps in an Austin A30.

COLUMNIST

AIDEN NEATE



The 15-year-old has his sights on two championships in 2022, plus on F1's title in the future

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Neate is after '22 British F4 title



Neate's dad Andy is a BTCC racer – and a big help

There's only one goal going into this British Formula 4 season and that's to try and come away with the championship, which is a very possible thing to do.

We have an amazing team behind us and from the first round we'll be fighting at the front. Also to reach our future programmes I have to make sure we get results from the second I step in the car and every time I get in the car.

I competed from mid-season in British F4 last year with Argenti Motorsport, with my debut race – where I finished sixth – the day after I turned the minimum age of 15. I'd beforehand done two French F4 meetings, which definitely put us in a better position.

Last year, my first season racing cars, had ups and downs definitely, but overall it was a very strong rookie year and I picked up podiums in the back half. It was definitely a big big learning curve and I am hoping to apply that this year.

The biggest area I improved was mentally; I've come a long way in dealing with things on track and off track and separating the two. The

last few weekends of last season I'd turn up to the track believing I could win, which is almost always the biggest thing because if you think you can win you can win. In my head I'm always the best on track, which I do believe.

My dad Andy races too, and he always used to make jokes when we were in the paddock when I was even four or five years old saying 'you'll be on there one day', and now I am. I got my first kart when I was four and then I was never unhappy while sat in a kart or a car so it was always something I always wanted to do since that first day.

Dad and I both raced at the same meetings last year, as he raced in British touring cars. It was weird because we wanted to watch each other but our races are one after each other normally. We were though always giving each other as much advice as we could, anything we learned or found such as if there was an oil spill on track.

Always in motorsport when you have a new chassis, as we have in British F4 this year, it's a gamble what team you go for but last year Argenti gave me absolutely no reasons to part with them so I'm really happy to continue with them this year.

I also am currently getting advance experience of the second-generation F4 chassis from competing in the UAE F4 championship with Prema. This will put us in a very very good position for British F4 from the first weekend to attack at the front. You can do as many test days as you want but you don't learn as much as in a race weekend, where everything is sped up especially the learning curve. So it was almost a no brainer to do UAE F4 and when you have the option with Prema you can't really say no.

It's going to be a big step to everyone including the teams to switch to the new cars, but it's a challenge I'm looking forward to. Also the biggest thing in motorsport is adaptability; if you can't adapt between cars you're going to struggle from the start.

I do always feel the second I get in the car I'm confident to maximise what we have. I've also got amazing people around me that help with everything.

There's absolutely no reason at all why we can't go for the championship in UAE as well, and there's the FIA superlicence points up for grabs in both championships that can help you the whole way through for testing in the future.

In motorsport I believe the difference is with the people that do the extra bit that will find the extra tenth or half a tenth, which in the lower formulae is so so important when everybody's in reasonably equal cars. That person will win the race, and win the championship, which is what you need to step up and for big Formula 1 bosses to go 'I like him'.

Right now my only goal in the long long term is to be an F1 World champion; if it wasn't I don't think I would still be doing it and that's what I'm going to work my absolute best to achieve. Obviously it won't be easy, there's hundreds of other drivers trying to achieve the same, but that's what I want.

Neate (l) picked up three podiums late last season



"I always feel the second I get in the car I can maximise what we have"

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE



Relive Gary Paffett's title-winning season

Twice DTM champion Gary Paffett gives us the lowdown on his career in this week's Motorsport News, as the latest to sit in our readers' Q&A hotseat. Paffett has many motorsport experiences and achievements, and is most associated with Mercedes and DTM. The Bromley man raced in the German tin-top contest for an incredible and near-unbroken 15 seasons, and all of them with the three-pointed star. It was therefore appropriate that in Paffett's and Mercedes' farewell DTM season they secured the title in dramatic fashion at that year's finale at Hockenheim, pipping Rene Rast and Paul di Resta.

And if you'd like a scan of Paffett at his best in DTM, thankfully the championship is one that puts plenty of its on-track coverage on YouTube. You can watch the best of the year of Paffett's latest DTM crown in a 2018 DTM season review. It's on YouTube over three parts at: youtube.com/watch?v=8TmbOZZjv4, youtube.com/watch?v=psskmpkwVIs and youtube.com/watch?v=AdNCJWqY3uU. While if you want more, there is also a more evocative 11-minute review of the 2018 DTM year at: youtube.com/watch?v=S9RmYf1WfXY, or you can search for 'DTM 2018 - The Season

Movie 2018 | Recap and Emotions'. There are also plenty of round-by-round highlights videos from Paffett's first DTM title year in 2005. You can watch every one of his five victories from that season: his Lausitzring win is at: youtube.com/watch?v=3ZluSJvXMaA, his Oschersleben victory is at: youtube.com/watch?v=VpXJbev8wOw, Norisring is at: youtube.com/watch?v=2L9NYWWyZnE, Zandvoort is at: youtube.com/watch?v=RcGVadpgBMW and his Istanbul triumph is at: youtube.com/watch?v=srIVfVONQ_Y.

Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

After what seems a blink since Abu Dhabi, Michael Masi and all that, Formula 1's 2022 season is suddenly kicking into life. This week we have the first twitch in the form of the car launches, revealing machines that promise to be very different in F1's brave new world. And Sky Sports F1 lets us have our first glimpses. It shows Aston Martin's launch at 1400hrs-1445hrs today (Thursday), and that's repeated starting at 1900hrs and 2100hrs. Then the McLaren gets a live launch tomorrow at 1900hrs-1945hrs, and that's shown again starting at 2130hrs.

LIVE TV

FORMULA E MEXICO CITY
Race: Saturday, 2130hrs-2335hrs, Eurosport 2

There are also several opportunities this week on Sky Sports F1 to watch The F1 Show wherein its pundits chew over Abu Dhabi's controversial season closer. That's on today at 1230hrs-1400hrs and 2200hrs-2330hrs, plus is on again tomorrow and on Monday. You also on the channel



Wraps come off new-look F1

today can watch last year's remarkable Hungarian Grand Prix, starting at 1500hrs. Formula E's second meeting of the season from Mexico City is here this weekend too. And Eurosport 2, ahead of its Saturday live coverage, allows you to get up to speed on Diriyah's recent season-opening

double-header too at 2030hrs-2130hrs, while Channel 4 shows the Mexico race post hoc on Sunday at 0830hrs-0930hrs. Premier Sports 2 on Sunday shows NASCAR's season-opening Busch Clash at The Coliseum from last weekend in full at 1200hrs-1600hrs.

Graham Keilloh

WHAT'S ON

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Condor Motorsport Club (Non-spectator event)
condormsc.co.uk/event-details/milltown-stages



Formula E: Mexico

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Gary Hill's picture from the recent Brands Hatch Stages Rally

ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S
FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Justin Ward's pic from Brands



The F1 champ, from Dean Chilvers



BTCC testing, from Rich Cranston



Rich Cranston's Dukeries photo

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OUT THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17

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We investigate what goes on in race control buildings

REMEMBERING TONY POND

We reflect on one of rallying's true heroes



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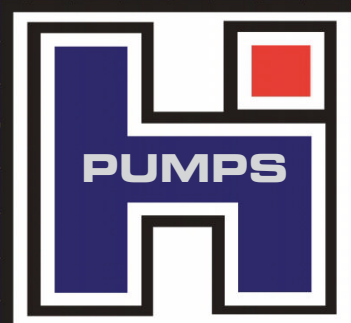
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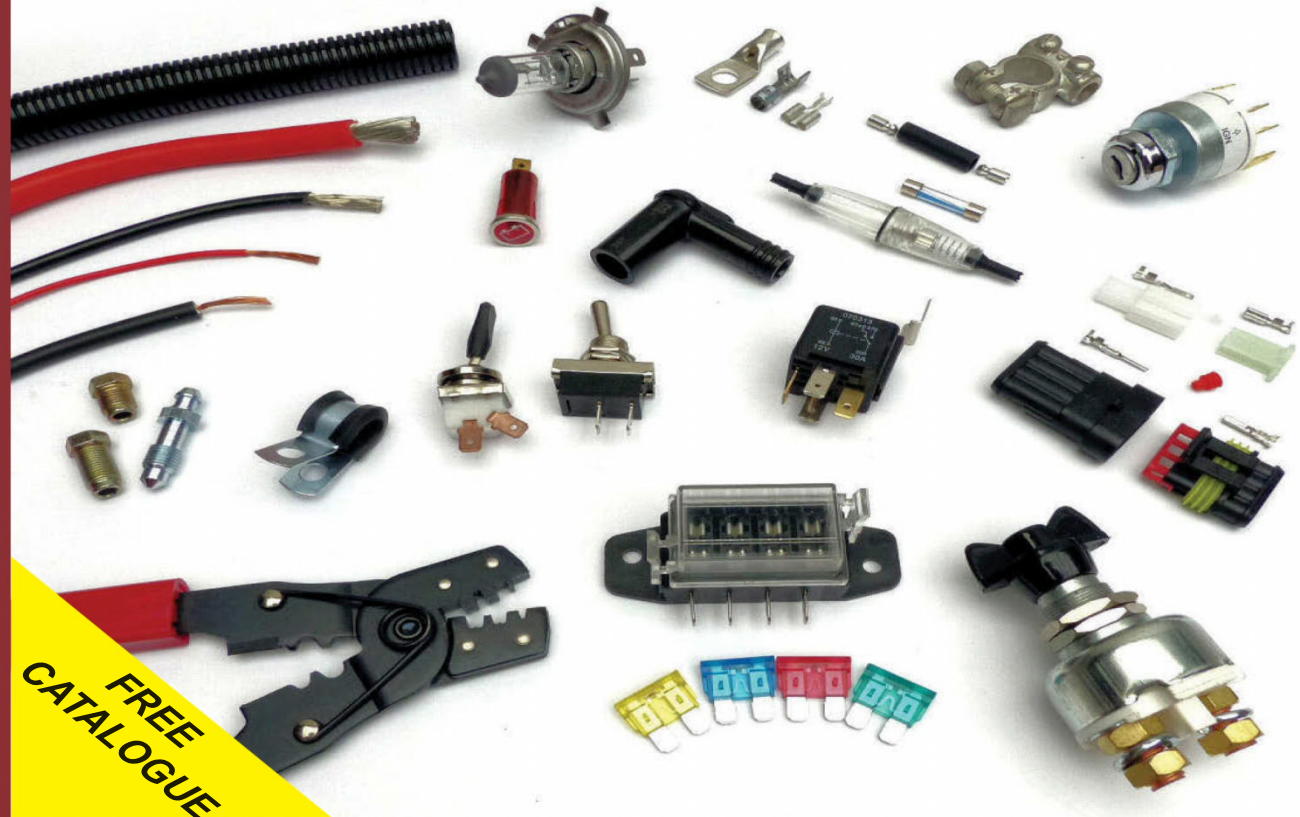
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